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MY ALASKAN IDYLL

BY HM

HJALMAR RUTZEBECK
AUTHOR OF "ALASKA MAN'S LUCK"

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BEGINNINGS

MY ALASKAN IDYLL

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

EVEN as I sit now, the picture of our home comes before me, and the possibility in which it abounds, and I wonder that I have been so fortunate as to come to possess it all. The cabin that Marian called "Just a little bit of the woods made into a home with greeny-gray walls and moss chinking"—the cabin, although ever so small and humble, that seemed like a palace to us. The new cook-stove, so little, yet so efficient; the cupboard where our summer's grub was stored away; the bed in the corner, covered with a gay woven rug; the bookshelf, where all Marian's books were neatly shelved; and the little window set askew in the logs, curtained by batik print that she had made—oh, it was a house of much promise, and much wealth.

We came to Alaska from the southland in the early spring, before the snow had yet gone off. There were huge drifts of it left in the hollows where the winter winds had piled it, and where the warm spring sun had not yet had time to be effective. On the evening of our arrival we found the trail up the long hill to the cabin piled deep with snow, softened by the sun, but not yet melted. Leaving the beach, we climbed up and up, sinking hip-deep at every second step, scrambling out, only to sink again. I realized that she had never seen

snow more than ankle-deep, and I was frightened, for it seemed that the harsh contrast with her former life must surely be too much; but when at last we reached the top of the hill, and she was still cheerful, I was completely happy, for I knew then that she was made for me, and for this new land that needs men and women who can be cheerful though tired.

Odin's Lake, ice-covered, lay at our feet, and the sides of our cabin showed through the trees. The moon shone on the window-panes, comforting, and beckoning to us. We were home! We lighted a fire in the stove; then, while I went down to the beach for the bedding-roll, she cooked our first meal in the home I had made for her out of the bounty of the forest. We were very, very happy alone together there in the woods, and it seemed to me that all my dreams had come true, and that my cup of joy was full to overflowing.

But morning came, and the early sun shone through the spruce tops on our window-pane, while the squirrels chattered in the branches outside, telling us that day was on the way, and that there were many hours for love, and sleep, and story-telling, but that there was also work to do. So the spruce knots were made to crackle and splutter in the stove, and the hot cakes gave forth their enticing aroma. We ate and set about the tasks that were for us to do—she to use her gift of love for home-making; I to use my strength to bring up the food for our summer's comfort. As the day grew older and we had time to chat while I rested between trips to the beach for the heavy loads, we planned many things that were to be done; and though we were now completely happy, we planned to do many delightful

things to make us more happy, to win honour, fame, and riches; and my heart leaped with joy for the love of her, and life, and the task that lay ahead of me.

There was a ton of luggage and supplies to be brought from the beach up to the cabin, three hundred feet above and a quarter of a mile away. Some of the loads, such as the new cook-stove, were heavy ones, and I felt as if a good deal were accomplished when everything was up and stored away. Besides our new belongings we had a summer's supply of grub, and it looked at first as if the little cabin could not hold it, but when things were put in place there was enough room after all.

As we made cupboards and stowed away our goods we planned our summer's work. There was the land to clear—five acres covered with alder and willow stumps that needed to be pulled, piled, and burned; then the garden to plough, and the main crop of ruta-bagas to be seeded in. After that it would be time to get ready for fishing, and while fishing the crop must be hoed and thinned out. After that would come the harvest and an addition to the cabin. We were very happy to have so much to look forward to. There was only one blot in the perfect pattern, and that was that it seemed as if we could never get time to do it all.

By the end of the first week I was free to go after the clearing, and when Marian had nothing else to do she came down to help me, dragging sticks, and stumps, and roots to the piles where they burned. It was hardly ladylike work, but she wanted to help me, and she said that, after all, being ladylike was merely a matter of custom; and if we both worked hard when we were young and strong and liked it, we might not

have to work so much when we grew older. So we laboured along side by side. In the mornings I started the breakfast cooking, and when we were all fresh and clean from the water of the lake, we ate our morning meal; together we washed the dishes, and then set out for the clearing below by the beach. Marian's muscles became sore from the unusual strain; but she knew that that was the price she had to pay in order to become strong and able, so she did not mind. Often when in the evening we climbed wearily up the hill after a long day, we would stop half-way to sit on a moss-covered boulder and look down through the tops of the trees to the bay below. We wondered at the beauty of the place—the rocky, moss-streaked cliffs above, the clearing below with its fringe of spruce-trees, silhouetted against the fiord—and then we would talk anew, for talk often lagged toward the end of the day, when the hands grew slower and the back was loath to straighten up. Then often as I looked at her dear, childlike face I held her close, and said the words that never seemed to be old to her, and the sun would shine in her eyes. Then again we would climb over the steep rocks of the trail to our nest on the shore of the lake. Together we would prepare our evening meal, and then stretch our tired bodies on the couch, and talk, or read from the good books we had brought with us.

Time came when the garden was ready to be planted. We each made rows straight as arrows by stretching a rope from stake to stake. Then we dug trenches according to the directions on the seed packages, and dropped the tiny seeds one by one, covering them with the finest soil we could find, pressing it firmly over them.

There were lettuce, carrots, turnips, beets, brussels sprouts, peas, beans, onions, radishes, kale, and other things, each one a promise of future wealth. No one up here had ever had good-luck with corn, but we tried it anyway, just because we were happy. At each row we placed a stake whereon we wrote the name of the vegetable. I had never spent happier days than those of planting, for though the work was not hard, we were accomplishing a great deal, and had plenty of time to talk and play. We debated the placing of each bed, and nearly squabbled over the question of how far apart onions ought to be planted. I was in favour of putting them as close together as possible, thinning as we used them. I was biassed in my opinion because I had cleared the ground, and I wanted to concentrate the garden as much as possible, leaving more room for the main crop of rutabagas. But Marian saw the large space of five acres covered with brush-piles and stumps, and it seemed to her that we had lots of land, so why crowd the onions?

"We ought at least to put them six inches apart," she insisted, and gave me so many sophisticated arguments that I was swayed by them and almost had to give in. We grew rather eloquent and insistent, but after she had won the battle we laughed at our own vehemence, and compromised by placing them three inches apart.

Then came days of clearing land again, pulling stumps, piling brush, and burning the piles with huge bonfires that sent their yellow flames leaping high in the air, scorching our hands and faces. We made many trips with increasing anxiety to the corner where the garden was planted to see if something had not

started growing. We dug seeds up from each row every day to see how they were coming along, and it was with much joy and delighted comment that we discovered the first white sprouts in the seeds, and the first green leaves sticking their heads above the soil in long scattered rows. We felt that we had created this new life, and we loved each leaf and rejoiced in the coming of every new one, dreading at the same time the day when we would have to pull most of them out by the roots to give room for growth for the favoured few who were to survive their less fortunate comrades. But most of the time we spent making the rest of the land ready for the rutabaga seed.

It was hard work for both of us when we worked together, and doubly hard for me on rainy days when I was alone, while Marian remained in the cabin to write letters or wash our clothes. On such days I missed her terribly, for we grew day by day closer together. It seemed to me that there never had been a more perfectly matched man and woman. We were both healthy, were interested in the same things, liked the same things to read and the same things to eat. Our ideals were alike, and we both loved the country—Marian because she loved what she had seen of it, and I because I knew its summers and its winters, its peace and its tempest.

When she had seen the ice and cold come and go a couple of times, then she would know the land and love it as I did. Our temperaments were so splendidly complementary—I with my fiery impulsiveness, quick to decide and to act; she with her womanly conservatism, calm and deliberate, ready to hold me in check when I grew too radical, and ever steady and alert to

guide my often straying energy into constructive action. Thus one day when I was jerking and straining on a small willow stump that seemed determined to remain in the ground, and I, exasperated at the stubbornness of the thing, was madly and vainly wasting my strength, she stood by for a moment or two watching the show, and then quietly asked: "Why don't you cut some of those long roots that are holding it?"

I took the mattock and cut them, and the stump came out without trouble. After that I cut a root or two on each one before wrestling with it, and the work was much easier. Of course, a woman makes many suggestions that do not fit in at all, and asks numerous questions, so it is no wonder if she makes a wise one once in a while. One day she called me: "Oh, Svend; wait a minute. There was something I wanted to ask you."

I was leaving the cabin in the morning to go down to the clearing.

"Tell me how the trout in the lake chase the frogs out." She had seen a frog in the lake, and had worried about the water not being pure; so I had told her the trout would soon come up the creek, and then the frogs would depart.

"I have been thinking about this," Marian continued, "and I wondered how the trout managed it."

As a matter of fact I had fibbed in the first place, for I knew that the frogs spawned in one part of the lake, and that apparently the trout never bothered them at all, nor their young ones, the pollywags. But this was only in the still places in the lake, where there was no current. Where we got our water there was a current

from a little creek that ran into the lake, and the water was pure and sweet. I had only wanted to set her mind at rest about the matter, as a frog or two could not seriously pollute a lake some twelve hundred feet in diameter. I decided to strengthen my story by telling another one, so I told her that the trout treated the frogs' toes as worms, and ate them off, and then the poor things had to take to the land. But that was too much even for Marian.

It is truly remarkable how much there is to learn about this country. I never realized it till Marian's inquiring spirit noticed all the things that were so radically different from Southern California.

Everything was new and strange to her: the many different kinds of foliage, animal signs, and birds; the changing of the tides with their mysterious rise and fall; the lay of the mountains; the working of the glaciers, and the different formations of the rocks. Many of these things I did not know about, and these we discussed, sometimes forming theories of our own, sometimes filing them away in our minds as something to be looked up when we had the time. Thus we learned many things, Marian from asking, and I from ruminating on the questions and problems she put to me.

Often we talked of when I should again begin to write. I had thought, before I was married, that once I had a wife I could write to my heart's content, for I should have no housework to do, and that would give me lots of free time. I had not known then of the precious hours a man spends at his home that are the essence of married life. The millions of things there are to talk about, and the warm, cheerful fellowship in

the hours of leisure that I would not, could not, set aside for the writing. Marian's mother had told me before we left her home that I probably would not write for some time after we were married. I had smiled then, for I thought I knew better, but she, wise woman, was right. I did not write, and surely it was better so. My education was so very incomplete. I had left school when I was twelve, and had never really studied. I could have done no good work had I tried, and we agreed that I would gain more knowledge of English from our reading aloud and our talks than I could from writing about the things I already knew about. Thus, though my aim, my ambition, was to become a writer, I realized that the time had not yet come to make the initial attempt. I did not even write my diary, for the hours with Marian were too full of other joys.

By the middle of June we had about three acres grubbed up, with only the worst stumps left in the ground. We made long drills and planted our rutabaga seed. This took several days, and then it was time to prepare for the fishing season.

After borrowing a tent, twelve feet by sixteen, from my nearest neighbour, I cleared a place for it in the alder border that runs along the beach, built a crib of logs, and placed the tent on top. I made a bed of driftwood, covered by a mattress of spruce and hemlock boughs, put up shelves and cupboards for our clothes and food, brought down the old Yukon stove from the cabin, and there was our summer's residence.

THE SALMON CANNERY

CHAPTER II

THE SALMON CANNERY

I HAD to make a trip to the Chilkoot cannery to arrange for nets to fish with, and I doubted if I could come back the same day, for it was seventeen miles to the cannery, and some of it was very rough walking over the boulder-strewn beach. Then, too, I had to spend some time buying a skiff. Marian and I talked the matter over several times, and we decided that she should go to Haines the first day, staying there overnight; and that I should go to the cannery the next day, and then we would try to get a gas-boat to take us home when I came back.

But when the day to go arrived it was raining and blowing; no weather for a girl recently from the southland to go out in for such a long and strenuous trip. She had to stay at home. It was the first time she would ever have been alone overnight, and we were both loath to say good-bye; but time was short, and I could not put off going. I left her in an open glade in the woods on the trail to Flat Bay. She stood leaning against a gnarled white-bleached branch of a fallen swamp pine, and in her blue apron and soft white tam, with the green of the alder and spruce all about her, she was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. I looked back again and again to wave her good-bye, and to see her standing there so sweetly, bravely, patiently. I marvelled that she was mine. It seemed impossible

that this beautiful vision belonged to me. My spirit soared as I leaped along the trail toward town. I was so happy that I was afraid the gods would be jealous of me. It seemed to me that we were receiving more than our share of happiness. Surely we could not always be joyous and care-free. Maybe even now Marian was lonesome there in the deep woods by the lake all alone. She had been with me practically all the time she had been in Alaska, for though I had gone to town several times for the mail, I had always come back the same day. Now when I was to stay away the whole night, would she be afraid?

I knew there was nothing to fear, except being alone in the woods, but I had myself been afraid in the woods not so many years before when I was new to the silent places. What if she should leave the cabin and try to follow me? I hurried on. I would try to make it back that same day. It was only thirty-five miles or so. I had done better many a time before. I ran and ran. I did not stop at the first neighbour's house, but hurried past, waving to them as I hastened on. The tide was out, and I crossed almost at the mouth of the long inlet that is named Flat Bay, gaining a mile by it.

There were salmon jumping in the bay, glistening streaks of silver as they leaped from the water and fell back with a thwack and a swirl of foam. They were sockeyes of an early run. I spurted ahead, for I was eager to get my boat and my nets so I could begin fishing. The price had almost doubled, and if I caught as many as I had the year before, it would mean a good deal, enough to more than pay off the indebtedness that I had piled up buying our summer's food and the many other necessities.

I forgot for a time my worry about Marian, and ran on through the forest, across the neck of the Chilkat Peninsula to Litnikoff Bay, where Niece O'Brien lived. He was out in his potato-field—looking for the crop to break through, I suppose—and I gave a whoop and waved to him, then sped over the boulder-strewn beach for five miles to where the trail crossed the peninsula to Fort Seward.

It seemed no time at all till I reached the town, asked for our mail, and ran down to the dock to see if there were any cannery boats in. Sure enough, there lay the *Hyak* at the landing. I was just in time to find that she was bound for the cannery, and to hop on board before she went puffing away.

We reached the cannery in time to eat dinner with the crew, and soon after I had made arrangements with the superintendent for an old fish-boat to keep my fish in, and for nets. They had me on the books, he told me, and had saved some good nets for me because I was a "crackerjack fisherman." The superintendent seemed to be in a very good humour. He treated me to a bottle of ginger ale, and said that if I would like to choose my boat I could go down to the beach with him and look them over.

The general store in front of his office was crowded with Indians, and more were constantly coming in. They sat around on boxes and barrels, talking low to one another. To-day they were to arrange with the cannery for the price for the season. One of them, a young chap, went to the door, and motioned for me to come outside. I went out, and several young fishermen who had been hanging around the door and windows gathered about.

"You fish this year?" the Indian who had brought me out asked.

"Yes."

"How much he pay?" — meaning the superintendent.

"I don't know. The price has not been set yet, has it? I take whatever you fellows decide on."

"This year all Indian boys stick together," my young interrogator informed me. "We want our price, or we won't fish. You want to stay with us?"

"Sure," I said. "If you fellows will stick together, I'm with you. The more money we get for fish, the better for us fishermen."

"All right," he said, and motioning for our little group to follow, he went into the store again, and we crowded in among the waiting Indians.

I was the only white fisherman present.

The superintendent was walking up and down behind the counter, chewing on a half-smoked cigar. He was a medium-sized man, well rounded in the middle. He wore a loose white sailor hat and a leather vest with a fountain-pen, pencils, and notebooks sticking out of all his pockets, giving him an air of officialdom and importance. His face was round with a stubby moustache, a finely shaped hook nose, and blue, rather humorous and kindly eyes, with pouches under them which I was told later denoted night hours spent playing poker with the crew in the bunkhouse, or gambling with the Orientals in the China-house.

When the store was packed so full that surely all the natives were there, he began to talk as he walked, and all the natives stopped their conversations and paid attention.

"Men," the superintendent began, "I got a letter from the outside to-day, and I want to tell you about it. It told me of the price of salmon in different parts of Alaska this year. In Behring Sea, the company furnishes boat and gear, and the fishermen get ten cents for sockeyes, two cents for dog salmon, and one cent for pinks."

He waited a while to let this soak in, walking up and down, chewing on his cigar as if in deep thought.

The Indians made a few hurried remarks to one another, and then an expectant hush fell on the assemblage.

"To the westward in Cook's Inlet the company furnishes boats and gear, and pays twelve cents for sockeyes, two cents for dogs, and one cent for pinks."

Another pause, and a few guttural remarks from some of the old bucks.

"In Chatham Straits, and all up and down South-Eastern Alaska, where the fishermen have their own boats, and many of them their own nets and gear, the price of fish is twenty cents for sockeyes, fifteen cents for cohoes, two cents for dog salmon, and one cent for pinks. We can get all the salmon we can handle here at that price."

He stopped again. Looking about me, I could see that some of my fellow-fishermen were beginning to get worried.

The superintendent smiled. "This cannery," he said in a loud voice, to drown the talk that had been aroused by his remarks—"this cannery furnishes boats and gear, and agrees to furnish to each gas-boat ten gallons of distillate every week, and will pay twenty-

five cents for sockeyes, twenty cents for cohoes, four cents for dogs, and two cents for pinks."

It was very quiet in the store for a few minutes after that announcement. Then an old Indian, looking at the ceiling, uttered a string of Thlinket gutturals. When he was through, another on the opposite side of the room said something. Then several more were heard from. They all spoke in Thlinket.

"Charley King," the superintendent said, looking around, and perceiving the young buck who had talked to me hidden away in a corner by the window. "Here, Charley; what are these fellows talking about?"

Charley grinned sheepishly. "They say they want twenty-five cents for cohoes too, and five cents for dog salmon."

Mr. Birdnett smiled dryly, and walked up and down chewing his cigar. "Men, this cannery pays twenty-five cents for sockeys, twenty cents for cohoes, four cents for dogs, and two cents for pinks. This is the biggest price paid for fish in Alaska this summer, and if you don't want to take it you needn't fish for us. If I can't make a dollar on the salmon, I'll have the nets put away in the loft and fish with traps alone. That's all." He threw up his hands, indicating that this was the end of the conference.

Charley King looked desperate as the Indians began to mill about preparatory to leaving the store, as if accepting the company's terms. "We go outside and talk it over," he said as they all filed out. He tried to hold them together by making a speech to them in Thlinket, but they seemed to have lost interest in the affair, and began to drift away to their tents and shanty homes.

The superintendent came out of the office and smiled to me. "Well, Svend," he said, "let's go down and take a look at the boats."

We walked along the beach to where the fishing-boats were hauled up above the high-tide line. He showed me two that had not been taken. One was a fairly good boat, and I selected it for mine. I asked him for a new mast, sail, and gear, for I thought I might tie my nets together and go drifting when it was good weather. He agreed to this, and said that he would send the boat and my nets down as soon as they were ready. Then we started back. An old Indian came out of the brush and cringed up to us. "Mr. Birdnett," he said with a sort of whine and a grin, "I fish for you."

"All right," the superintendent said briskly, and we walked on.

A little farther on another Indian stepped out from behind a boat. "Mr. Birdnett"—he cringed and grinned—"I fish for you."

Five or six of them we met on the way; and from the manner in which they sidled up one by one, it was plain to see that their conference had not brought any unity of action.

Mr. Birdnett smiled. "There is nothing like working on their psychology. They would have formed a union right away, and there would have been no end of wrangling if we had let them have their way. They got the idea last year that they could 'stick together,' as they call it." He laughed.

The natives had stuck together the summer before, for a week anyway. The company's traps were catching more fish than the cannery could handle.

Something had to be done, so the superintendent placed a notice in the office window saying that the price would be cut from sixteen to twelve and a half cents for red fish. It was rough weather, most unpleasant to fish in, so the Indians delivered the ultimatum that the shrewd canneryman had expected, and went on strike. They stayed on shore for a week, and by that time the congestion was relieved, and a notice was posted saying that the strike had been won by the natives, and that they could have their sixteen cents. There was great joy among the Indians, and they set out eagerly and fished with renewed effort.

I reached Haines by five o'clock in the afternoon, and by seven I had found a dory-shaped skiff that was for sale, bought it, and set out for home. I rowed along the beach to get shelter behind the points, and in the back eddies of the current, for I had both wind and tide against me. However, the wind felt as if it were about to die out, and as the tide would turn in an hour I kept on, happy in the knowledge that I was going back to Marian. It was a very beautiful evening, more so because it had been raining most of the day, and the spruce and hemlock woods glistened with raindrops, and everything else along the shore looked cool and fresh. The black rocks and cliffs along the beach gleamed in the evening sun. As the wind died out I could hear the song of the birds in the tree-tops, for this was their mating season, and they sang, full-throated and joyous, everywhere in the woods and along the shore. This made me realize anew that in an hour or two I should be with my mate, where she could hear me sing my love-song to her. I strained at the oars

that I might sooner reach Point Comfort across from Viking's Cove, where she would be able to hear my song and know that I was coming to her. For all those eight miles to Viking's Cove I sang and whooped with joy, for I was exuberantly happy. I invented new words to new tunes to tell the fiord and the woods, the cliffs and the rocks, the wonderful happiness that had come into my life. I did not worry as I had done in the morning. I knew that she was waiting for me, and that she loved me, for the world was full of love. It was in the air, in the woods, in the water, and all living things were vibrating to it.

The tide turned and the breeze died out, so the fiord lay shining smooth, only broken here and there by salmon leaping out of the water, falling back with a splash that could be heard from shore to shore of the five-mile waterway. They, too, were imbued with the love that permeated everything, and were hurrying to the spawning streams to obey the universal call of life. High overhead in the blue sky two eagles soared round and round in wide, even circles, and I wondered if they, too, felt the joy of life that seemed so abundantly lavished on all creation this perfect evening.

At Point Comfort, where the deep indentation in the coast-line forms Flat Bay, and across from which lay Viking's Cove with its gray pebbly beach gleaming in the rays of the low-hanging sun (for it was now about nine o'clock), fresh joy flooded through my veins.

There across the beautiful bay was my ranch, the clearing showing up splendidly in the evening light. There were the picturesque cliffs that I loved, standing like the ruined walls of ancient castles, and behind

them was Marian waiting for me to come home. All of this was mine, and with the fiord, the mountains, the woods, the glaciers, the clean, cool air : all mine to live in, to roam through, to use, and to love—mine and hers. It was our heritage from the dreams we had dreamed, and the ideals we had sought to attain. No longer were they dreams, but splendid realities, and I whooped in joy and thankfulness for the lot that had become mine. I whooped as loudly as I could, and sang mightily the songs that I had made on the way that told her of my love for her, and of many other things, in the old-time saga fashion.

She did not hear, for she had not expected me back that night, and had gone to sleep; but our neighbours and their visitors at the ranch on Flat Bay heard, and they thought it must be drunken Indians, and were greatly worried. My yells reverberated from mountain-side to mountain-side, sounding, they told me later, as if there were a dozen of me. One of the boys had lain at an upstairs window with a ·22 calibre rifle for the rest of the night after hearing "that awful noise," ready to repel an attack; and he was found there asleep in the morning.

Fortunately I did not know this at the time, so I whooped and sang to my heart's content, and when the bow of my new skiff grated on the gravel beach, I sprang out of the boat, tied it to a rock, and ran up the trail to the cabin by the lake. I crept quietly in, and found her sleeping. Bending over her, I kissed her; and in her sleep she reached up, and put her arms around my neck. Then she awoke, not startled nor frightened, but sweetly and quietly with a smile, and a look of love in her dear eyes. "Dearest," she said,

"you are back! I was dreaming that I heard you singing to me."

Thus ended a long, fruitful day. There were many of them, and as they passed we grew closer and closer together, for we always had plenty to talk about or read. We never grew bored, and the longer we were together the less we felt the need of other men and other women.

A few days after the trip to the cannery my nets and fishboat arrived, and I was very busy putting out anchors, buoys, and shore-lines. On the 1st of July my nets were in the water, and all that remained now was for the salmon to come and get into them. My new skiff was only large enough for one to work in, so Marian and I were apart most of the daytime. However, the blue currants along the beach were getting ripe, and as they made delicious jelly when mixed with green highbush cranberries, it was perhaps as well that she had time to gather these fruits and prepare them for the winter. When I was not attending to my gear and we had nothing else to do, we went up to the clearing and thinned rutabagas. We had sowed them so thickly that in every place where there ought to have been one rutabaga-plant there were twenty. We pulled all of the smaller ones out, leaving the large, healthy ones in, and perhaps it was a good thing for the crop, as we had not much time to cultivate them. Once they were freed from the competition of their crowding fellows, they straightened up, spread out, and grew rapidly.

FISHING FAILURES AND GOLD-MINING

CHAPTER III

FISHING FAILURES AND GOLD-MINING

But the salmon did not come. During July I caught only three hundred sockeyes, while the year before I had caught more than fifteen hundred of them with two old torn nets that I did not know how to handle. This year I kept my nets in good shape. My anchors stayed where I put them, and I was out on the water most of the time plucking seaweed and other driftage from the meshes, so the fish would not be frightened and go around them. I soaked my nets in bluestone every two weeks to cut the slime, and give them the colour that made them almost invisible in the water; but, nevertheless, the salmon did not come as they had the year before.

I could think of nothing that I was leaving undone, but I could not make the fish come. We had expected the returns from my fishing to pay off the debt that had accumulated, but as the season grew older we came to realize that we were not going to make it. Plenty of fish were going past our bay up into the river, and the other fishermen were catching them right along. The run on the Chilkoot side was considered to be practically over by the middle of August, so we saw that we would have to depend on our rutabagas to get us out of the hole.

As the fish continued to disappoint us, we spent more and more time on the crop, so that it would be

sure to get us out of the difficulty. We hoped to get between five hundred and a thousand sacks from it. At two dollars a sack that would give us more than enough to square ourselves with the merchants.

Then it was that Bob came to visit us. He was one of my Viking friends whose business was gold-mining —a short, compact man, with a generous nose, a flowing moustache, stubborn brown hair, and a beard that somehow would not stay shaven, but seemed always a day or two old. His eyes were blue, twinkling, and kind. He stayed with us for several days and helped with the fishing. In due time he learned that we were not prosperous, and that there were bills due to the merchants in town which could not be paid until later in the fall, when we had returns from the rutabagas. We were through thinning these now, the crop looked fine, and there was apparently nothing else needed to be done to it. On Saturday Bob and I took the nets in and hung them on the racks to dry. I had only caught fifty-four sockeyes that week, and the run was about over.

"Why don't you do something else instead of fishing?" Bob asked me in his direct way.

"Well," I said, "how could I know that I wouldn't get a run? I've been hoping and ready. I might have stopped just when they started running."

"I mean now," Bob cried. "The season is over, isn't it? Why don't you quit now, and do something else?"

"I hadn't thought of it before this. It's not so easy, you know, when a man is married. I couldn't very well leave Marian here."

"Take her along," Bob advised.

"Where to? I don't know of any job I can take her along to."

"I do;" and he looked straight at me, enjoying my surprise. "That's what I came down here for. Oscar and I have a lease on a piece of ground on the Upper Porcupine. We haven't worked on it yet this summer, and we have to do a certain amount or lose the lease. Come on up there and bring your wife. We have a good cabin up there you can live in, and I can guarantee you wages, or you can take a third of what gold we get."

It sounded good to me. I knew the ground he was speaking of, and I was sure there was likely to be a pot of gold anywhere on those claims. We consulted Marian about it, and after a good deal of talk we decided to go. Bob went back to town over the trail, for he wanted to get back to his work as soon as possible, and Marian and I were to settle up with the cannery and then follow him. We were glad to have a vacation from our steady work of land-clearing, fishing, and rutabaga thinning, so we were both eager to go. We could stay up on the Porcupine for three or four weeks, and still have plenty of time left to attend to our crop.

On Sunday I packed all our stuff from the tent on the beach to the cabin by the lake, that it might not tempt passers-by while we were gone. Then on Monday morning we loaded the nets and the few things we wanted to take along into the Columbia river fishing-boat that I had used to keep my salmon in, raised the mast, hoisted the sail, and with a fine south wind behind us glided up the fiord toward town. This was Marian's first trip in a sail-boat, and she was delighted.

With the bulging sail spread before us, the waves lifting us along the beautiful mountain-locked fiord, we were as happy as the sea-gulls circling over the cliffs and mounting high into the air. I told sea stories; we sang sailor songs, and talked of the old-time Vikings who roamed about on uncharted oceans, landing on strange beaches ready to face an unknown number of enemies. How recklessly brave they must have been! We forgot our failure at fishing for a time, for we were young and in love with each other; we were living an adventure, and if everything else failed we could work for wages to pay off the debt we owed. Also we were embarking on a new experience that would provide a vacation, would not cost us much, and which might bring us a lot of money; so why worry?

We arrived in Haines at noon, and decided to go up and have dinner with some of our friends. Northern hospitality makes us all like a big family, and we were at home in town as well as on the ranch. It was late to start for Chilkoot after our visit, and we put off our start till the next morning, spending the night with our friends.

The next morning the wind had died down to a faint breeze, and the sky looked ominous to me, as if a storm was brewing. But as it was only a short way to Chilkoot, we boarded our boat, and Marian bailed her out with a bucket, while I got the mast up and the sail ready to hoist. Then I rowed us away from the landing with long sweeps of the twelve-foot oars, for I felt very potent that morning, and my muscles were loaded with energy.

When we were clear of the wharf, I hoisted the sail and stuck the sprit into its socket. The low-hanging

mist was beginning to rise from the mountain-sides, joining the racing cloud hosts higher up, where it was plain to see a storm was raging. It worried me, and I began to wish that I had not started, or that I had left Marian safe in town. She would be far better off on the shore when the storm gave battle. But she had wanted to see the cannery in operation, and who can resist the plea of a charming woman when that plea includes having her for a companion? She was at the tiller when the wind began to shift this way and that. I yelled for her to look out for the boom and to duck under the gunwale if it should shift across suddenly. All at once the wind died out completely, and the waves there were became glassy and oily-looking. I could hear a roaring sound from the side of the mountain near by. It grew louder and louder. It was blowing a gale up there and the wind was coming down. From the south-east almost across the fiord there came a ripple on the water. The sail began to flap.

I yelled to Marian to put the tiller up. She put it down, and the boat went into the wind. The sail flapped, and the boom banged back and forth, almost knocking her overboard. I jumped to the tiller, and pushed her down into the bottom of the boat, out of the way of the heavy pole, that had already struck her once. The sail made such a racket that she could not hear what I said, so I had to act; but she smiled to me from down there, and I knew she understood, and was not angry with me. The wind kept shifting from south-east to south, and as we had to make it around a rocky point to the east, I had to keep as close to the wind as I could, with the result that the sail was flapping in the wind half the time, and we made but little headway.

I was just telling Marian what to do to keep the sail full of wind, and that when I yelled to put the tiller up it meant to push the stick to the windward, when a bag of wind came out of the sky, filled our sail, and laid the boat over on her side, railing under water. I let go of the sheet to take the pressure off, but the boat was half full of water before she righted herself, and she was heading straight for the rocky point. I yelled to Marian to hang on to the upper side if the boat should keel over, and to try to get around on the bottom of her if she should turn over. Then I dashed for the mast, loosed the halyard, and dragged the sail down. I took the sprit out and tied the peak of the sail down to the tack by the base of the mast, making a "leg-o'-mutton" sail of it, and then I hoisted it up again.

It was high time, for we were drifting sideways on to the rocky point. I jumped back in the stern, and showed Marian how to hold the sheet and tiller to the best advantage, and then bailed out as rapidly as I could. For a while it looked as if we would not make it past the point. We could see the waves, which were rapidly growing larger, splash over the rocks and reefs, and we thought we could even hear the roaring of the surf, but there were plenty of whitecaps breaking all about us, and I suppose it was that we heard. The tide was with us, however, and as the boat became lighter we made better way, and we could also head more with the wind, so that soon the danger of the rocks was past, and we had a straight course to the north with a southerly gale driving us along. The wind grew stronger and stronger, and the waves became large and dangerous. Our skiff, which we were towing, was lifted high above the stern of our boat, threatening to

swoop down on us when a large wave rushed up upon us from behind. I had only a short painter on it, so I could not give it more line, and it reared and rushed, swinging from side to side, jerking back to the back-tow of the waves, till I was afraid the rope would snap in two or the ring pull out of the bow.

Once when it careened far to one side there came a gust of wind. We tore ahead before it, and the bow of our already water-logged skiff was pulled under water. She turned over and the oars spilled out, but there was nothing we could do about that. It would have been folly to manœuvre around in such a gale just for a pair of oars, so we let the skiff drag along the best it could, hoping its painter would not break so we would lose it too. Before long we rounded the next point, and headed north-west for the cannery, with the storm directly astern.

In the inlet proper the waves were not so bad, and we had time to think of something else. I looked at Marian as she sat there at the tiller, her one hand holding the sheet, ready to take off the turn on the pin in the rail if it should be necessary, the other pink hand grasping the tiller till the white showed on the knuckles. She was soaked to the skin, but she was not afraid, for her eyes shone blue and full of light, and her cheeks were brightly pink with excitement. Though wet strands of hair strayed over her face and her clothes hung dripping upon her, it seemed to me that I had never seen her more beautiful. She looked over and smiled to me, and again the wonder rushed over me that she was real, and mine. I told her how wonderful she was, but she laughed, scoffing at me. No woman, she said, could be beautiful with wet, untidy

clothes and stringing hair. I was surely the most foolish of lovers if I could think so. Nevertheless, there were lights of joy in her eyes as she made her protestations, for any woman who is healthy likes to be told that she is beautiful.

The cannery people were quite surprised when they saw us come sailing in on such a day; and they were still more surprised when we came ashore, wet to the skin. The book-keeper's wife took Marian in, and got her warmed up, while I went to the store and settled with the company. I had more money coming to me than I had expected—enough to pay off one-third of our debt—and that cheered me up greatly. I told the book-keeper something of my financial difficulties, and he laughed at me, saying that I was a fool to worry about debts. "Let the other fellow do the worrying," he said. A queer thing for a book-keeper to say, I thought.

After dinner there was a cannery tender going to Haines. With the help of the crew I got my skiff up on her deck, and soon we were on our way back, heading straight into the storm, pitching and rolling, sometimes making no headway at all. I was for turning back when we reached the point where Chilkoot Inlet enters Lynn Canal, for there was a terrible sea. But the big, broad-shouldered Swede who was her captain only smiled at my suggestion, and said that it was only the outgoing tide that made such a sea at the point. Once when Marian was busily watching the waves out of the window of the pilot-house, he leaned over with a little smile and whispered to me: "Does getting married make a man afraid of the sea?"

I looked at Marian and at the raging waters. Then

I looked soberly at the Swede and nodded my head. He looked out of the window for quite a while before he bent over me again and said kindly : " I think I would be afraid too."

In Haines we found that the school-teacher from Kluck Wan was in town, having brought his team down for a load of freight. He invited us to ride up with him. As I looked at him, tall, blond, blue-eyed, with a ready smile and a kind heart, it occurred to me that the blond, blue-eyed people were the surviving sort up here. At least, they seemed to get along the best, and I wondered if I with my brown eyes and reddish hair were as fit for this country as the teacher. I was glad that I had married Marian, and that she was blond. This in turn gave me an idea. If blond types were the survivors up here, might not the inhabitants of Alaska in time come to resemble those of the Scandinavian countries? I thought of a book Marian and I had been reading together that told of the old Norse mythology, explaining the influence of the natural conditions of a country upon the religion of its inhabitants. I visualized this country in the far future populated with a sturdy blond race believing in the existence of Odin, the god of justice, and Thor, the god of strength. What a story it would make! I should try to write it in the winter.

We started up the river the next morning in the school-teacher's waggon.

The scenery along the Chilkat is superb at all times, but on that day it surpassed itself. Perhaps it was because Marian was making her first trip inland, or maybe it was because I was so overwhelmingly happy to be there in the waggon, breathing the warm sun-

shine, with my friend to talk to and my wife at my side. Cathedral Mountain was wonderful to see, with its towering peaks and pinnacles pointing into the blue, and with green-blue broken glaciers on either side. I pointed out the Kicking Horse Canyon, cut deep in the glossy black walls of the mountain, and told how one winter evening when I was up there alone hunting ptarmigan it had grown dusk, and I had heard a pack of wolves come howling down the canyon fit to scare a man to death. I had come down the canyon on my skis, down-grade with a strong wind behind me! It had seemed as if I were actually flying at times.

One could hardly believe that this was the same canyon now, so green and peaceful were the woods above it, and so white and warm were the gravel bars where its stream merged with the Chilkat. Marian could not conceive of this green land, with its dense growth of shrubs and foliage, being all white and covered up.

To her, who was from beautiful Southern California, where there was never snow except high in the mountains in winter, Alaskan winter had no real significance. She had heard tales of the cold and snow, of ski-ing and skating, of sleighing with dog-team strung out in single file, but now that she was actually in this green land they still seemed strange to anticipate.

The school-teacher told us much of the Indians and their life here on the Chilkat before the white man came, of their ways and customs, and with what difficulty they changed from hunters and fishermen who had always had plenty without actual labour, into wage-earners and agriculturists, according to the fashion of the white man. All the way up the twenty-

three miles to Kluck Wan we talked, and I was happy, for it was my desire to have my friends become Marian's friends too. At the eighteen-mile post we stopped for a little while in front of Eighteen-Mile Ben's cabin. That is the only name I have ever heard the old rancher called. I introduced him to Marian, and he was very bashful. Good old Ben!—rugged, unkempt, with gnarled, calloused hands, stubby beard, broken teeth, and eyes set above high cheek-bones. At first glance he could almost be called ugly, but through the ugliness of his charcoal-smeared face (for he had been clearing land before we came) there shone the light of cleanly kindliness, and one never thought of him except as "good old Eighteen-Mile Ben." Any passers-by are welcome at Ben's cabin. He will feed them, and bed them, and smile to them in his kindly way. He grows most of his food, for his needs are simple and the earth is generous in its bounty; and because he has only himself, the traveller is the more welcome. This day he told us that the Indian dogs had killed one of his pigs the night before. He told us of it rather sorrowfully, but without a touch of malice, and he added consolingly that after all it was a very little pig, and he had five others that were much larger. He asked us in to have a cup of coffee and something to eat; but we had to move on, as the horses were slow, and the teacher never prodded them on. It was late afternoon, and we had yet five miles to go. So we said good-bye, and drove on through the cottonwood forest where the road leaves the river and cuts across a point of land formed by the bend in the stream.

At Kluck Wan we were greeted by a host of dogs. They came out at us in packs from under the houses

of their owners, barked, snarled, and crawled back in, watching us and bristling. There were many houses in the town. Some of them down near the water's edge were made of great hewed slabs with smoke-holes in the tops in the primitive fashion. There were small, well-built cabins, fashioned according to the white man's style, and there were large frame-houses made of lumber, boasting many windows and real chimneys. Some of these, however, had no window-panes in them, and the teacher told us that they were spirit-houses, built in honour of dead relatives or parents, used sometimes for guests when there was a potlatch, or feast. Counting the spirit-houses, of which there were many, there seemed to be housing room for several hundred families, but we saw only a few Indians round about and hardly any children. This was because many of them who called Kluck Wan their home were out working for the canneries or fishing salmon in the fiord and bays. Then, too, many of the Kluck Wan Indians had emigrated to Juneau, Ketchikan, or Wrangle, where they could find more employment.

We had supper with the school-teacher and his wife; then in the clear twilight we walked over to the missionary's house. It was he who, a long time before, befriended me, and gave me faith as I started on the long trail to the interior, his words that gave me strength when my courage failed me. Now, as he looked at me with Marian, there grew in his eyes a rare happiness. He was glad because, after all my tribulations, I had achieved my aim to have a home, a mate, and be happy. Once when Marian and his partner-wife were busy in women's talk of Alaskan berries and preserving, he gripped my hand and said:

Svend, when you wrote me, and said that she was a girl in a thousand, I smiled, for every young lover thinks she is one in a thousand; but now I agree with you, and you must be a very happy man."

I wanted to thank him, but words could not tell the warmth of friendship I felt for that man of the Church, and the best I could do was to grip his hand and hold it tight. I felt that this man had confidence in me, and that kindled in me a love for him and his. His life had been one of struggle too, though in a different way from mine. He had come to this Indian town almost twenty years before to teach the Gospel of Christ to a heathen people, who fought and murdered amongst themselves, and who tortured their women and young boys, sometimes to death, in punishment for witchcraft when they were unfortunate enough to have displeased the medicine-man.

It had been an uphill struggle for the missionary and his wife, often with very real danger to their lives—as once, for example, when he rescued a young lad who was being buried alive for witchcraft, by an outraged mob bent on destruction. There had been many nights of anxiety for him and his wife when it came to their ears that they and their little ones were being plotted against by those who believed in the medicine-man and his witchcraft. But through it all they had held on to the faith that they were doing a good and necessary work, and God had been good to them and blessed them with seven fine, healthy, pink-cheeked children. They lived a very ideal life there among the Indians, who in time had learned to love and respect this good man and woman who were so eager to help them.

At Porcupine the superintendent of the mine whom we had met on the boat coming up was very cordial to us. After dinner he made a small sunny cabin ready for us. We had still four miles to go before we came to Bob and Oscar's camp, and as it was almost straight up and Marian did not feel equal to a thousand-foot climb after our thirteen-mile walk from Bonnie Brook, we were glad to make camp for the night.

We went to the mine in the afternoon and watched the men roll boulders into the buckets to be hoisted out of the pit fifty feet below the level of the river, where they were digging down to bedrock to find the gold in the crevices and potholes. Mr. Nolan showed us some of the gold they had cleaned up in the last pit; nice yellow nuggets they were, weighing from ten cents to twenty dollars, and had all sorts of fantastic shapes. We spent the afternoon scratching round the old diggings, trying to find a stray nugget, and talking to the superintendent. That is, he did most of the talking. He told us of his new system of wages. A man ought to get what he was worth, he believed, and that if one man could give him as much labour as two average men, that man ought to be entitled to two men's pay. He believed in a minimum wage, and that the men should be rated from that up to as much as they were worth. He paid three-fifty and board as a minimum, he said; and he pointed out a young Swede, a mere boy of eighteen, with the build of a giant, and told us that that lad was getting six dollars a day, and was worth every cent of it according to the work the others did. "I am going to raise his wages again," Mr. Nolan said enthusiastically. "He is a regular wonder at rolling boulders."

We had supper with them, and breakfast the next morning, and then we began the steep ascent to the camp on the upper Porcupine.

Up at the edge of the timber-line, where there were long stretches of alder thickets with tongues of evergreens reaching up the mountain-side, the trail ran with only a slight grade along the steep hillside. Here the path had been made, not only by walking over it, but with pick and shovel, and it was good to walk on. We had a wonderful view now all the time, for the alders had been slashed in a wide swathe, and we could see all of the other side of the Porcupine Canyon, and also up the river to the great glacier that covered most of the mountain at the head of the river. A mile of this and we were near the bench where a group of claims were located on an old channel of the Porcupine. We could hear the men's axes over the rushing water in the ditch, and I let out a whoop and a yell to let them know of our presence.

Bob and Oscar came scrambling up from the edge of the canyon, where they were beginning to make a pit. Good friends they were, these sturdy Norsemen, and oh, so eager to please and show their friendship! I had been one of them in the old days, but now I felt that this was not so any longer, for I was married. Some day, if their dreams came true, they would have wives too, but I had left them behind me. The fact that I was married to a beautiful woman was enough to win the respect and admiration of these lonely great-hearts. They led us to their cabin, which they immediately began to evacuate that we might have it for our home. There was no changing their plan. We were to have the cabin if we were to stay, and they would

live in a tent. So we made ourselves at home, and Marian cooked the dinner of bear-meat (for Oscar had killed a bear a few days before), new potatoes, bannock, cake, and tea. As soon as Bob and Oscar had made their home out under the canvas in the woods, they came in, and soon conversation and planning was in full swing.

They had a piece of ground blocked out at the edge of the bench that they were going to work. It lay between two creeks, and they had made a ditch between them so that all of the water could be turned into either channel. They believed there was an old channel near the rim of the bench, because Oscar and Ivar, another Viking friend, had driven a tunnel in under the gravel for twenty feet on bedrock, and at the end had found a dip in the bedrock, and had taken out nearly a hundred dollars in heavy gold in the depression. Then Ivar had severely cut his hand, and as winter was coming fast they had let the diggings be for that year. We were to work down from on top, making a pit thirty feet wide and thirty feet long. If there was an old channel, as the dip in the formation indicated, it was sure to be rich, for the bedrock was soft, and gold would have stopped on it. As they explained the situation I grew more and more interested and eager to get started. The gold fever was getting hold of me —of all four of us, for that matter. There might be thousands down there under that gravel, and we wanted to get at it.

After we had eaten, it was evident that we were all anxious to get started, so we hurried, all of us helping at washing the dishes, washing off the oilcloth on the table, and sweeping out the cabin. Then we made for the diggings.

We turned the water into the creek-bed we wanted to work, and began, with mattocks, chopping the tangled roots and sod from the first layer of earth. The water carried everything away that was loose, and aided greatly in the loosening process too. When we had one strip worked off, we built a dam at the head of our pit and turned the water in on the next pit, and before long we had the whole surface off the piece of ground we wanted to work. Then we turned the water in along one side of the pit, and with picks dug, pried, and scraped, loosening the gravel and boulders so the water could get under them and carry them down the steep grade to the edge of the canyon, where we could hear them rumbling and pounding on rocks and trees over the four-hundred-foot fall to the Porcupine. We worked in silence mostly, for we were all very much interested, and it was hard work bending over with a pick and rolling heavy boulders.

Marian soon grew tired. She came out of the pit and sat on the bank of the creek in the sunshine. There in the woodsy setting, with the green slanting alders in the immediate background and the great mountains all round, with us three crude, sweating miners at her feet, she looked like a woodland goddess to me—and to the others too, as I could tell by their stolen glances at her and Bob's constant undertone reminder of what a lucky man I was.

"By God, you are a lucky man!" And then he would blush for fear he had said something he shouldn't have, and worked feverishly for a while to hide his agitation, while Oscar would scowl and glare at him, mumbling something about decency, and I would smile, amused, but happy through and through.

But Marian was the one who knew how to put these woodsmen at their ease. Her friendliness and good sense made them feel that she was one of them, for whenever there was an awkward moment she would ask some question about the gold. Why didn't it run down the bank with the rest of the gravel? Where was the sluice-box going to be? How would we keep it from floating away when we turned the water through it? There were many things that puzzled her.

We did not think about the time till Bob straightened his back and looked at his watch. He chuckled. "Well, I guess we can go home now. It's eight o'clock."

We were astonished that the afternoon had gone so quickly. There was quite a hole in the bank—but that it was eight o'clock was incredible! Still, the sun was behind the mountain, and only shone on the peaks opposite us to the east, while the Porcupine Canyon lay in deep shadow. We went back to the cabin and warmed up what was left from dinner. Then we sat around listening to Bob's old-time Baby Edison phonograph that he had packed with him for a number of years, till now it rattled and scraped and ground, though it still made music. Then we wound the alarm clock, listened a couple of times to the alarm, which chimed a bit of Japanese opera, better music than the phonograph's, said good-night and pleasant dreams to the Vikings, and turned in after a day well spent.

Morning, and the little clock chimed its song over and over again. It was a beautiful tune, and we were happy, full of peace, and pleased with the morning. I rolled out and built the fire, set on a basin of water for Marian, and then hurried to start the breakfast cook-

ing while Marian dressed, for a woman can never get things started as quickly as a man.

Marian had been elected cook the evening before, so she remained in the cabin while we three men made for the hole right after breakfast. I began to wonder if a woman would spoil a gold camp then, for they were different now that she was not with us. They sang, and joked, and laughed uproariously in their good old way, and were just as I had always known them to be in former days when I roamed with them, hunting in the woods and mountains, and fishing in the many lakes.

This was the price I had to pay for her—the jolly companionship of my comrades. "Is it worth it?" I wondered. I thought of the many days I had spent in the mountains alone and care-free, and of the many trips I had made with these my friends, riotous as children. But I also remembered how lonesome I had been sometimes in the midst of it all. Then I thought of the wonderful peace and happiness that had come into my life, of the many days and nights of intimate companionship that had been hers and mine; and the answer welled up in me till I wanted to shout it to the sky. She was worth it! A thousand times more! My soul was at peace with my lot as we worked, and laughed, and joked, rolling boulders in the splashing muddy water, digging down into the earth. Then Marian's clear voice came out of the woods over the rumble and splash of the creek, calling us to dinner.

As the days went by the hole rapidly grew deeper, and as we went farther down the boulders were larger and the gravel more solid. By the time we were fifteen

feet down it was almost like cement, and we were getting a bit discouraged. But it was then that Oscar dropped his pick, and sticking his hand down under water brought it up full of gravel. He picked the little stones out piece by piece, and then gave a yell that echoed from side to side of the canyon. He had a two-dollar nugget. It was yellow and flattened, as thick as a half-dollar and as large round as a pea. Not so much, considering that we had worked a week, but that it was gold and there was sure to be more of it! Marian had heard the whoop, and came running from the cabin, and we held a general rejoicing over the find. Then we set to work with renewed effort, and though we did not find any more gold that day, we felt that if there was gold ten feet from bedrock, it would be rich down there.

I began to have visions of our having a thousand dollars apiece or more, and planned what to do with all that money. I could do much for our home at Viking's Cove with a thousand dollars. I could have a larger cabin built, and finish the five-acre clearing by having the stumps pulled, and the whole thing ploughed in the fall after the rutabagas were out. It would give me a start that might mean success. If I had a thousand dollars, I might find time to write again that coming winter. I could not be satisfied until I began to write, for, after all, that was my ambition.

The next day we found several pieces of gold. Consequently Bob thought it wise to put in a sluice-box on bedrock at the edge of the bank we were working on. There might be some fine gold that we could save, so we set to work levelling a stretch of bedrock that had been cleaned up a couple of years before, so that the

sixteen-inch box could rest evenly on it, with the right grade.

After weighing it down with rocks at the side and fixing an apron at its intake, we turned the water into the pit again. Now the work went more slowly, for we could only use as much water as the box could carry, and we had to throw the larger rocks over the box, and roll the heavier boulders along the side of it, taking care not to let them crush the sides of the little flume, which was in the lowest place. Others that were too heavy to roll we slid down on long thick willow skids; and in one that was too heavy even for that, we had to drill a hole and blast it to pieces with a stick of dynamite. But we found gold right along now, small pieces like grains of wheat that were worth only a few cents, but there were several pieces that weighed over five dollars, and that was real encouragement. All the gravel went through the sluice-box now, and we were certain that gold was beginning to collect in the riffles, so we worked with increasing enthusiasm as bedrock grew nearer.

One day when I was picking away at a big piece of broken soft slate that Bob said was a piece of bedrock broken off, I noticed something yellow about the size of half my little finger. I struck at it several times, trying to pry it loose from where it was stuck in a crack in the rock. I thought it was a yellow pebble, for it was too large to be a nugget, and I had been disappointed a lot of times grabbing excitedly at yellow stones. So when I didn't get it loose I gave it up. Oscar, who had an eye for gold and who had found most of it so far, saw the thing from the other side of the pit, and coming over with his pick pried it loose,

and then let out another whoop that sent the air in the canyon reverberating.

I had been watching him and thought he was merely playing a joke on us, and I laughed knowingly. He couldn't fool me. Bob came rushing down from the head-gate, where he had been turning the water off, and Marian ran from the cabin to take part in the excitement. I couldn't help grinning as I bent my head over the boulder I was rolling, so that the others should not notice me and Oscar's joke be spoiled; but when they began to exclaim, and pass the thing from one to the other, weighing it in their hands and estimating its value, I found that the joke was on me. It was gold —a slug of it, like a slim date. Since it was almost noon, we went up to the cabin and weighed it. It came to a little less than two ounces, and was worth about thirty-two dollars. It was the best find that we had made yet, and we were greatly elated.

But my time up there at Kingdom Come, for so they called the claim, was drawing to a close. We had expected to stay two or three weeks, and on the day the large nugget was found we had been there eighteen days. In that time we had gone down almost twenty-five feet in the middle of our thirty-foot pit, and had cleared a small strip of bedrock, picking up about a hundred and fifty dollars. It now began to look like rain; and if it rained very much the narrow pit would no longer be safe to work in, as the gravel walls would not stand up very well with water running down over the sides. We worked fast to get as much bedrock cleaned as possible, to get the gold out of the sluice-box, and to take the box itself out of the way of caving banks and rolling boulders. We knew there was some

gold in the box, for whenever Bob found a piece smaller than a dollar's worth he threw it into the box, saying that he did not want to "get skunked" on the clean-up. But I figured that a nugget in the bag was worth more than one in the box, so I kept the ones I found and put them in the poke with the rest of the treasure, for I was not at all certain that the gold would be stopped by the riffle-blocks, though Bob assured me that there would be no gold lower than the second riffle, six feet from the intake, and that most of it would be caught by the first one. But then something might happen, and we might lose the box. Many times I looked apprehensively at two great boulders sticking out of the edge of the wall, one above the other, near the top. If they broke loose they would roll down on the sluice-box and crush it, for they must have weighed several tons apiece. I knew Bob was worried about them too, because I saw him contemplating them with puckered lips and knitted brows, estimating a way to slide them down over the box to the edge of the bench; but every time he did that he ended by shaking his head and muttering. He cautioned me to keep an eye on them, and not to work under them unless it was necessary.

We worked on a day and a half longer, clearing up another strip of bedrock, from which we picked up another hundred and fifty dollars, mostly in two-, three-, or five-dollar pieces. Then it began to rain in earnest, and Bob decided that we had better clean up what we had and get everything out of the hole. We turned the water into the pit for the last time to get some loose muck shovelled through the box, and it was then that it happened. The two boulders broke loose from the

bank and plunged down into the pit, while, from the jar, both sides caved several tons of gravel and rocks. The sluice-box smashed like an eggshell, loose dirt banked in front of it. The water backed up, and before we could rush to the head-gate to turn it off the whole thing broke loose, and in an avalanche of dirt and boulders the sluice-box went over the bank down the cliffs to the river four hundred feet below.

"Good-bye, six hundred dollars," Bob yelled after it; and then, turning to Oscar and me, who stood open-mouthed and flabbergasted, he grinned and said: "Well, who is the Jonah?" He had been in the mines prospecting for the greater part of his life, and a little thing like this was not going to bother him.

Oscar and I were crushed. We figured that there ought to have been at least twice as much gold in the box as we had put away, and that would mean six hundred dollars. Two hundred apiece. And now it was all down in the river, as scattered and out of sight as it had been before! And we had worked so hard to get at it! Of course, we had picked up over three hundred dollars. That was a hundred apiece for three weeks' work, and Bob and Oscar still had a month they could work in clearing up the pit, and cleaning up what pay-dirt there was left untouched.

We walked back to the cabin to talk the matter over. I felt that I ought to get back to my rutabagas. They were a sure thing—all I had to do was to get them to market. Both Bob and Oscar said that they had tired of gold-mining for the season. They would clean up what they could, and then they would come down to Viking's Cove to help me build my new cabin. We weighed the gold, and Bob and Oscar insisted on

splitting it in fours, for Marian, they claimed, had been as much a partner in the work as any of us. We did not think that was fair, for it was their lease; but they were stubborn as mules about it, and in the end Marian and I went down the trail with one hundred and sixty dollars in gold for our three weeks' vacation. This would pay another third of our debt, and we were very happy in spite of our compunctions. Surely the rutabagas could be depended on to furnish two hundred dollars. That would make us free of debt, and it might be that we would even get enough to live on over winter without having to work for wages all the time. Our certainty of financial success that year had been shaken. Fish had not come in hordes; the sluice-box had disappointed us; could we depend on the rutabagas? I was no longer sure, but was thinking of what I could do to earn a living through the winter.

It rained hard all the way down, and though the low clouds hid the beautiful mountains from our sight, there was a grandeur and mystery about the dusky forests with wisps of fog and mist hanging in the tree-tops and in the ravines, and there was splendour in the dark river, swollen by the rains, as it roared magnificently through the valley, carrying whole trees with it, rolling them over and over, their roots and branches waving in fantastic fashion. We had no raincoats along, so we became wet to the skin before we had gone very far, but we did not care. Hand in hand, we walked along the road singing and laughing, and exclaiming every little while at some new bit of scenery, a colour scheme, or a beautiful tree. This was September, and the foliage was beginning to dress for the fall carnival, when the wind would make music through

the forest and the leaves would fly like confetti. The cranberry-bushes had taken on a carmine hue, and once in a while in a grove of birches there would be a splash of gold among the green as if the forest had been touched by the glance of a roving god.

At Kluck Wan we dried out our clothes before the big stove in the teacher's house, had dinner, and then sat around in their warm library. Time did not lag for the want of things to talk about. We were all enthusiastic about the country, and we talked much of the agricultural possibilities, and of the advantages to be gained from artificial propagation of salmon. The teacher said that by establishing plants for salmon propagation in all the available creeks, South-Eastern Alaska would be able to supply the entire United States with salmon. He told many stories of how the Indians had lived before the white man came, and the stories they told of salmon so thick in the river that the water was almost invisible. Then there had been game everywhere, and fur had been so plentiful that each family had piles of skins, and their houses were lined with them. But after the white man had killed the salmon off, the beasts of prey had had to feed on other things. Fox and wolf and lynx, mink, marten, fisher, sable, and ermine, had to depend on rabbits and grouse, and many of them had emigrated to other localities. Grouse and rabbits had been decimated, eagles which had formerly fed on salmon soared high and killed the mountain sheep and goats till their ranks were greatly thinned too, and the Indians had had to emigrate to other localities, where they no longer lived by hunting and fishing, but worked in the mines, the woods, and the sawmills.

The white man had done nothing to restore the salmon, the teacher told us. When the red-meated fish could no longer be caught in paying quantities in the bays and straits outside, they had come closer and closer to the mouths of the rivers, and during the last few years had induced the few remaining Indians to take salmon off the very spawning-grounds, freight them down the river in canoes, and sell them to the canneries. And all this with no effort to perpetuate the fish. It would be but a simple matter, Mr. Shafer told us, to install hatcheries on the salmon creeks. The spawn of the fish could be saved at the canneries and shipped to the hatcheries without great expenditure to the Government or the canneries, and it was nothing short of folly not to do so. The teacher always grew vehement when he talked about the salmon. His work had been, and was, among the Indians, and they as well as the whole game life depended on the salmon for their existence.

Toward evening Steve Sheldon came up from Haines with an auto-truck. He was going back that same day, and we all decided to go down to Haines with him.

He was not long in coming back, for there was only a mile and a half to Wells, his destination, and soon we were all bundled into the bottom of the truck with a canvas over the top to keep the rain off us. The auto ran about a mile, then it stopped. Steve jumped off, cranked her up, jumped in again, and she ran about half a mile and stopped again. From then on she continued stopping every hundred yards or so. The floating valve in the carburettor had sprung a leak, and the motor could not get the gas right. Steve tried to

fix it up with chewing-gum, but it did not work. It seemed to grow worse and worse instead. It grew dark and the rain kept beating down in torrents. The canvas leaked, and we had difficulty in finding dry places to sit. We told jokes and stories, and laughed a great deal, but somehow that wore off as the night grew darker and we became more sleepy, wet, and sore from sitting in the hard bottom of the truck. It was about midnight when Steve finally got the carburettor fixed somehow, and the truck rumbled steadily on over the rutty, stony, uneven road. We seemed to go faster than an express train by the noise it made and the bumping we received, but in reality we went very slowly, for it was pitch-dark, the headlights were weak, the road in bad shape, rocky, with many curves, and the rain that had fallen flooding and obscuring everything.

Near the nine-mile post the engine spluttered a couple of times, back-fired, and then stopped. Steve swore under his breath and jumped off. "I was afraid of that," he said; "we're out of gas."

Cap Connor's ranch was near the seven-mile post. There was a house there and warmth.

We could not stay out there under the leaking canvas, so we all set out through the wet night. It was so dark that we could hardly see, but had to feel our way with our feet most of the time, but we were not downhearted as we had been in the truck, for the walking limbered us up, and made the blood circulate in our veins. We were going somewhere. We sang, and shouted, and made much noise, for there was no one living near except Cap Connor, and we were going to wake him up, anyway.

The old man had heard us all right, long before we reached there, and for safety's sake he had made a fire and put the coffee-pot on, for anyone out on such a night would be sure to be cold and wet, and might fall in. He met us at the door with a hearty welcome in true Alaskan fashion. That we had stirred him out in the middle of the night made no difference to this old bachelor; he was glad to have us come, and busied himself about getting out sour-dough bread, bacon, cheese, and butter. With the hot coffee going through us and a bite to eat by the throbbing stove, we were soon comfortable. His bed the old man ceded to the ladies, Mrs. Shafer and Marian, and the rest of us sat around and smoked or leaned up against the wall, dozing and listening to the rain drumming on the roof, thanking our stars that we did not have to walk to town in that weather.

Morning brought good enough weather to travel afoot. Our clothes were mostly dried out, and after having a bite of breakfast at Cap Connor's table, Marian and I started down-river, leaving the rest to wait for the car Steve Sheldon had gone in very early to get. The air was cool, clean, and invigorating, and as we limbered up walking along the road, our fatigue from the night's adventure wore off, and left us fresh and eager, happy to be alive and about in that beautiful world. We rounded the rocky point near the four-mile post, and went up a small gully to an old medicine-man's grave. It was a "deadhouse," as the Indians call it, a small box-like affair, roofed over and covered with totems of different makes and designs. In front of it was a war canoe, all warped and rotten, with paddles ready for use, a mast, and sail, torn and

rotted, in the bottom. The Indians say that the old man goes sailing over the river on stormy nights, and that there is always water in the bottom of the canoe after a storm, which is proof to them that he has been about. We sat a while on the prow of the old relic, and looked out over the widening mouth of the river to the inlet with its green islands, that seemed to be floating in the air over it, to the mountains all around with their dainty white caps; and we agreed that this was a wonderful spot in which to be buried, and that the old medicine-man had chosen well.

Then we walked on past Hyindustachy, once a prosperous Thlinket village, but where now only a few families lived. Here there were large windowless spirit-houses too, and old broken-down slab huts along the brink of the grassy sloughs that cut in there from the river. There was much traffic past Hyindustachy, and the dogs were so used to white persons walking past that they did not even raise their heads to look at us from where they lay lazily sprawled before the houses.

As the day grew older the sky became clearer and clearer, and by the time we reached Haines there was a steady flood of warm sunshine everywhere. The mountains stood out in their full grandeur—white-peaked, towering, magnificent. The wind had died down, and we decided to visit our nearest neighbours, the McRaes, at their town house, and then try to get a gas-boat to take us down to Viking's Cove in the afternoon.

I went down-town and distributed our money among the storekeepers whom we owed. I was happy to do this, for that debt was beginning to weigh heavily on

me. Two-thirds of it was paid now, but I had to buy a whole new line of supplies, as our grub at Viking's Cove was down to a whisper, and I needed spikes, nails, hinges, windows, and what not for the new cabin that was to be built after the rutabagas had been taken care of. Because Bob and Oscar were coming down to help me with that cabin, there were many things I bought which we might otherwise have done without. It amounted to almost as much as I had paid, and for a while I wondered if I would ever get out of the hole I was in. But it was too fine a day to be glooming, and I thought of the rutabagas that were growing and becoming more valuable every day. After all, I was improving our home. That was what we would do with our money if we had it, so it made no great difference. We merely had the things we wanted a little sooner than we were really entitled to have them. I engaged an Indian to take our load down to the ranch, and then I ran for McRae's house, for it was past dinner-time and I was very hungry.

"You are just in time," Mr. McRae said when I arrived. They were all at the table. "There's always room for one more." He laughed as they crowded a bit to make room for me beside Marian.

The McRaes were real old-timers. They had been in the country for about twenty years, and all their five children were Alaskans in the true sense of the word. Red-cheeked, robust, healthy, and hospitable, they were the finest product a country could have.

Their homestead was next to ours, and the beauty of the place, the splendid food they raised to eat, the fine climate with its clear-cut seasons, had all helped to make them healthy, kind, humanity-loving people.

Theirs was the ideal we strove for. Hand in hand the man and the woman had gone through life. They had built their home together there in the wilderness on the beautiful bay. They had worked together, shared in sorrow and in happiness, in pleasure and in pain. Their love for each other and for their children, merry, robust, and gentle, and their kindness of thought for their fellow-men, made the kindly light of God's goodness shine in their faces.

The gas-boat was loaded and ready for us when we arrived at the landing, and soon we were putt-putting along the glassy fiord to Viking's Cove. Whenever I write of that trip between Haines and our cove, I have within me a tremendous impulse to describe the scenery. It is so wonderful that I want to be sure to make it plain. The tall, stately mountains on the left away across the five-mile-wide fiord, with their bare, rugged, snow-capped peaks; the jewelled bits of glacier between them; the endless dark-green forests along their sides, streaked with foamy white waterfalls that tumble from shelf to shelf down the canyons; the many-coloured foliage of birch, willow, alder, maple and shrubs; and then the gray granite rocks and cliffs along the bottom that formed the shore, broken now and again by small coves with white pebbly beaches. On the right were the low rounded hills of Chilkat Peninsula with their deep, thick forest of hemlock and spruce, streaked and splotched with the autumn-coloured leaves of the deciduous trees. We ran close to that shore, for the Indians like to be close to the beach. They are still influenced by the time, not so very long ago, when they had only frail canoes to travel in, and when there were always enemies to

dodge. Along this shore there were many picturesque cliffs, for the hill went straight up most of the way, and being mostly of a soft rock formation, it was broken up with deep indentations in the straight walls, that formed canyons and caves along the shore, which were of ever tantalizing interest to Marian and me. Here along this shore too, half-way, was where jutted out Battery Point, with its two peculiar rugged promontories, forming a horseshoe cove between them, each with a bank of grass-covered gravel, as even and clear-cut as any battery embankment, and each point with a rocky knoll on the end that dropped steeply off into the water, and was partly covered by scattered, stunted, windswept scrub-pines.

Flat Bay, four miles farther down, cut away into the middle of the peninsula, and across it, two miles from Point Comfort, lay the white beach of Viking's Cove, with the clearing plainly showing that man had been at work.

All the way Marian and I sat close together in the stern of the boat, looking at the scenery and pointing out new splendours in it. It never grew old to me, and Marian said that the more she looked at it, the more she learned to love it. When we rounded Point Comfort and looked across to our clearing, where our crop showed bright green, in contrast to the splendid rocky cliffs behind which we knew stood our snug cabin by the bank of the lake, I looked into her face, and in me there welled a boundless joy as I saw the love in her eyes—the love born of the beauty of the land, of her splendid health, of our beautiful home, and of my devotion to her, and I was thankful to God for the glory that had come to me.

When we reached the cove it was high tide, which made unloading our things much easier. The Indian ran his boat up with its bow on the beach, and handed Marian and the cargo to me. Marian started to carry the lighter articles of our supplies up to our little store-house on the beach, while I piled the rest of the things in a heap as I received them from the Indian. Then I paid the man and shoved his boat off, and he went away. We were home once more. Soon the boxes and bags were stowed away in the little cabin, then we sat down together on the beach, leaning against a smooth driftwood log. The sun hung low over the mountains in the west, a great golden godly being, giving warmth, growth, and light. A school of whales were blowing across the bay, to Marian's immense satisfaction. They were rolling their black backs out of the water, sending jets of steam up into the air with long-drawn-out "aaaah's," then disappearing under the surface, sometimes sticking their tails high up when they dived down to stay a while. Porpoises were playing around our bay, and as if they were imitating the whales in miniature fashion, they emitted small jets of steam with short sharp "aah's." Suddenly a dog salmon jumped out of the water close to the beach, and a porpoise jumped out under it, even as it was in the air. There was a splash and a swirl, and I think that the salmon got away, for we saw the porpoise come clear out of the water the next time it blew, a good distance away, going like lightning. Then, as if by a given signal, salmon began to jump all over the bay. It was the turn of the tide and their time to play. I had seen this before, but it was new to Marian, and she was delighted. There must have happened to have

been a school of dog salmon drowsing in the bay, waiting for the tide to turn so that they could sense their way up-stream to their spawning-grounds, and now at "high-tide slack," as the fishermen call it, they were preparing to go on to the salmon streams. The porpoises, too, became more active, and several times we saw them giving chase to the speedy salmon. The bay was alive with them for about twenty minutes. Then as the tide began to flow out they ceased jumping, the sun dipped down behind the mountain, and only the lazy "aaaah's" of the whales could be heard and the quicker "aah's" of the porpoises.

Marian chuckled and waved her hand toward the busy stretch of water. "It's like the movies," she said. "We sit here and watch them going about their domestic concerns, and not one of them looks at the camera. If only we had a glass-bottomed boat or something, so we could really see what they are doing down there! I am simply suffering from curiosity."

I took her in my arms and kissed her, not knowing that there was anything watching us till she wriggled herself free with an excited "Look, look!" And, sure enough, there near the beach a seal lay with his head out of the water, watching us with an amused twinkle in his eyes. I threw a pebble down into the water, and he disappeared with hardly a ripple. We turned then and went up the hill, through the garden and the rutabaga patch, over the trail to the cabin that was our home. It was not dark yet, for the sun was still warm on the mountain-tops across the fiord to the east, and their peaks, covered with new snow, gleamed like pink pearls against the sky. We went down to the edge of the lake, and there was the reflection of them in the

water, even more gorgeous in its mystery than the glowing peaks themselves. The birches leaning over the lake from out of the spruce woods were splotched with gold; and over in the swamp the carpet of moss was brown, embroidered with the red of cranberry-bushes, the yellow of the blueberry-bushes, and the vivid deep green of the ferns, which would not change their colour till the heavy frosts killed them. Hand in hand we stood there, watching and wondering, and then I put my hands to my mouth and cried loud: "Who loves Marian?" and from the steep forest-covered hill across the lake there came the echo: "Who loves Marian?" "I love Marian," I called; and again came the answer: "I love Marian."

"You see," I said, putting my arm around her, "all the world loves Marian because she is sweet, and beautiful, and good."

She nestled closer to me. "You dear Viking!" was all she said.

WINTER ADVENTURES

CHAPTER IV

WINTER ADVENTURES

THE next day I packed the half-ton of stuff up the hill, and then harvesting began. I had bought six hundred gunny sacks at the Government post, and these I began to fill with rutabagas. It was slow work, for they had to be pulled, topped, and scraped free of roots with a knife, and it took longer than I had expected. It was raining, too—no weather for Marian to be out in; so I was alone, and I only pulled fifteen sacks the first day. At that rate it would take a long time to pull six hundred sacks, and I began thinking about hiring some men to help me. But my money was almost gone, and I didn't like to borrow, so I gave up that idea, and decided to pull as many as I could, and leave the rest till the spring. I had heard that they would live over winter if the heavy snows came before the severe frosts. I had a month to work in, anyway—maybe more—and in that time I ought to be able to pull at least four hundred sacks. At two cents a pound, which was the current price, that would be eight hundred dollars. Even if the expense of getting them to town and shipped were heavy, I ought to have six hundred dollars left for my summer's work. That was worth working long hours for. I got up early next morning, and though it rained violently all day, I pulled and sacked sixteen sacks.

The third day Oscar came down, and seeing my

predicament, offered to help me pull rutabagas, and take chances on getting paid when I got my money from them. That helped greatly, and in fourteen days we had four hundred sacks of rutabagas piled in a huge heap on the beach ready for shipment.

Bob had been called south on business connected with his claims, and would not be back up till spring, and Oscar and I had to build the new cabin by ourselves. But this Oscar assured me was all right, because Bob did so much talking on the job that we would be able to do more without him.

It was then that word came to us that the Territorial Government had sent a man up from Juneau to begin building a road down Chilkat Peninsula, connecting the ranches there with Haines. It was difficult to get men, and he asked Oscar and me if we would come to work. Of course, I wanted the road as soon as possible, and was glad to help; so I went to town and made arrangements with a gas-boat man to have my crop hauled in and shipped to Seattle. When everything was satisfactorily settled, Oscar and I packed our blankets across the peninsula to Pleasant Cove, where we were to begin work. It was arranged that we were to live with Martin Madsen, bachelor homesteader, for he had a comfortable house with a large kitchen, and a good-sized bedroom containing several beds. Marian came over as soon as we had a place arranged for her, because she had agreed to cook for us. Also the "Cyclone Swede" came to stay with us. He got his name at the time of the Shushana gold rush by being one of the first men to reach the diggings by way of Kluane, because he was an exceedingly fast walker. So Marian had four men to cook for. There was an-

other camp, a mile or so away on Litnikoff Bay, but there they had only room for a few men, and were already crowded. Marian offered to cook for our camp free of charge, and the offer was accepted. Both of us wanted the road so badly that we would have been glad to work for nothing in order to get the work started in the proper manner.

Marian had never done this kind of work before, and was a bit scared at first, but soon she found that cooking for five was not much more difficult than cooking for the two of us, so we were all satisfied.

The winter came early that year. All during October it snowed and rained, snowed and rained, and we worked in the wet, and slush, and snow, coming in wet and muddy every night, making the house reek with our woollen garments drying by the stove. It was not a nice place for a young fastidious woman to live in; but we wanted the road, and were willing to suffer a bit for it. The men were not always very delicate in their speech, for they were all crude woodsmen—good, true, honest men, though—and often Marian pretended she did not notice when one of them blundered into impolite phraseology. At such times I was afraid that this was too much, and that I had no right to ask her to stay with me in the camp. I liked the men, for they were all my friends, the kind of men one could trust under any circumstances, and I liked them to know and be friends with my wife, for I wanted her to love the north and its ways, even if they were harsh and crude. But to have her there in the camp constantly, separated at night only by a thin partition from the room where they sat up late telling in their own way experiences and jokes, often highly improper, in sub-

dued voices which they thought we could not hear—I wondered if it were right to have her there, she who had lived such a sheltered life. I spoke to her of it, but she laughed at me, and said that she paid attention only to their good hearts, and no harm could come to her from what they said.

In the woods we slashed a wide swathe through the timber, where the road should go. From the other end of the section we had begun on, the other gang slashed away, and it was with great joy that we anticipated the day when we should meet in the middle of the forest. But that day did not arrive. Winter came too soon, and one morning we woke up to find a blizzard blowing outside, with three feet of snow on the ground. One of the men came over from the other camp to tell us that work was discontinued for the season, and that we were to bring our tools over to be put away for the winter. I was certain the snow would go off again, and went over to Litnikoff Bay to see if I could not induce the boss to keep on working. But when I got there I saw the futility of my quest. The men were camped in the bunkhouses of the new cannery, shacks which had been built for summer use only. Fine snow was driving along, filtering through seams and cracks under the doors, around the windows and along the walls, and all the beds were covered with the fine powdered stuff, with more of it constantly coming in. There were pools of water on the floor around the stoves where the snow was melting, and even though the fires were kept roaring hot, the cold wind seemed to blow right through the houses, keeping them like ice-boxes. No man could work under such conditions, and the fat coloured cook expressed the sentiments of

the whole camp when he said feelingly: "When the boat whistles farewell to this camp it will be sweet music to me."

I went back, and we all gathered our tools and took them over to the main camp. That same afternoon the wind died down, and the boat came from Jones's Point and took them all to Haines. Oscar stayed with us, however, for he had promised me to help build our new cabin, and he insisted that we could do it before the snow became too deep for us.

We rolled up our blankets, shouldered them, and departed for Viking's Cove. The snow was belly-deep over the trail, and Oscar and I alternately took the lead. It was such hard work, that it took us three hours to reach the McRae ranch, two miles across the peninsula, and by that time it was beginning to grow dusk.

When we reached the beach where we could look across the water to Viking's Cove, I saw something that almost stopped my heart's beating. Our huge pile of rutabagas was still on the beach, looming up in the dusk like a great low cabin. Because I had made such definite arrangements with the gas-boatman in Haines about freighting them in, and shipping them to Seattle for me, I had been certain that those rutabagas had been on the way a long time since, and I was even beginning to wonder when I would get the money for them. To see them there on the beach was a tremendous blow to all three of us, and we hurried on over the slippery rocks to see if it was, after all, not an illusion. But it was not. They were there; all of them in a huge heap where we had piled them, partly covered with snow. They were not yet frozen, however, for there

had been no hard frosts, and rutabagas can stand a great deal of cold, so there was still hope.

I hurried to town the next day, and found that the man who was to have taken my crop in had sold his boat to an Indian a day or so after he had spoken to me. The Indian was supposed to take in the four hundred sacks, but something had gone wrong with his engine, and he had been delayed again and again. He would be ready in a couple of days, he assured me, and I had to be content with that, for his boat was the only one in the water, all the other gas-boatmen having their craft high and dry on the beach for the winter. I offered him two dollars more a trip if he would hurry up. Of course, he accepted it, and went to work at his engine again at the same rate as before, while I walked back to Viking's Cove, not knowing when he would come.

Oscar and I had been looking over a stand of timber adjoining the ranch, and we had decided to see if we could not get some wood contracts for the winter. We could fell the trees, haul them to the beach, make them into rafts, and have them towed to Skagway or Haines. While I was in town I met an old acquaintance who was employed by the drug-store in Skagway, and I offered him a commission on all the wood contracts he could procure for me. He went to Skagway that same day, and I had at least some good news to take to Oscar and Marian, for Doc had said that he was certain to get us several contracts for two hundred cords each.

Anxiously awaiting the Indian who was to freight our rutabagas to town, we began working on our new cabin. It was to stand directly in front of the old one,

connected with it by a hallway four feet long. The weather had turned soft again, with rain and slush, so the snow was melting fast. We cleared off the foundation, grubbed out the stumps and boulders that were too high for the floor, and then before the next snow came we had the sills down on a firm foundation, the stringers for the lower floor in, and several rounds of logs on. We hewed the logs on three sides, so they were smooth on the inside, and rough and barky on the outside. Getting the logs up to the house was a difficult task, for we had to go farther and farther away to get them, and we had no horse to drag them for us. We put down willow skids, drove our axes into the logs, and pulled them along by the axe-handles; but often when we had to pull them uphill it was slow work and hard pulling, and we laboured and sweated in the slush snow. Sometimes we even had to call on Marian to give us a pull, and at such times we were always greatly cheered just by looking at her, so fresh, and clean, and pink, and jolly. To know that it was her home I was building was enough to set the fires of ambition racing through my veins, and I believe Oscar was glad, too, that it was for her; for one day when we had an extra heavy log to drag, and were pulling it along through a foot or more of newly fallen snow, stumbling into holes, wet to the skin from sweat and melting snow, grunting and straining with the effort, he straightened his back, looked up through the tops of the trees, and said: "If I were in a camp in the woods, in the mines, or on the railroad, and had to work like we do now, I would throw my axe as far as I could, and go to the timekeeper to get my check. I wouldn't do this for any amount of money." He looked at me and wiped the sweat from

his face. "Don't you ever try to pay me for this. I'm doing this because I promised, and because I like you and your wife, and I don't want pay for it. If I thought that I was hired to do it, I'd leave for town this minute."

Good friend Oscar! I did not know what to say, but I went over to him and clasped his hand. Life is worth living when there are men like that around.

A week went by, and still the Indian did not come. The danger of heavy frosts grew more imminent, for with every day the real winter was coming nearer. We went down and covered the rutabagas with all the spare sacks we had, a lot of dry grass and a big piece of canvas, for the root-house that I had made while I was fishing was only a small affair, and would not hold more than a dozen sacks. Already it was well filled with six sacks of potatoes, and a couple of sacks of parsnips, carrots, and white turnips.

Then Doc came down with four men. They did not come up to the house, but made camp in my little cabin on the beach, put up a tent, and set to work felling timber on the strip of land that Oscar and I had planned to get our wood from. They had been there two days before we knew anything about it, and then Doc came up and made us a visit. He was sanguine enough about it, and did not appear to think that he had done anything out of the way, or that Oscar and I had anything to do with the cutting of the wood in that particular grove. Little by little, however, I got it out of him that he had gone to Skagway, and solicited some six thousand dollars' worth of wood contracts. Knowing that I had no money to start a big camp with, he had gone to his employers, the druggists, and asked

them for financial backing. They in turn had taken the whole thing off his hands, had procured a grant on the timber from the Government, and had sent Doc down with four men to start a camp and cut timber.

I asked Doc if they would give us a job, and he said that maybe after a while when things were going smoothly they might need us.

After he had gone, Marian, Oscar, and I held council on the subject. There was no doubt that Doc had double-crossed us. He had taken our idea, turned it over to his employers, and let them exploit our scheme. But there was nothing we could do except to make the best of it. They had the grant on the timber, and, as it was, we might get a job from them during the winter, which might be better than taking a chance of borrowing money and running the outfit ourselves.

So we made no trouble, but kept on with the building of our cabin. I did try to get the wood-cutters to haul my rutabagas; but they had only a small boat, and they were too busy anyway, and the pile of rutabagas lay on the beach another week. Then I went to town to see about the Indian, and while there I met Mr. Emory, of Skagway. It was he who had taken over the wood proposition, and though he tried to be friendly, I thought he was a little bit cold to me. I wondered if he knew that I had intended to cut wood on my own hook down there on Viking's Cove, and if he expected me to be angry with him. 'A'nyway, I did not let him know that I was disappointed, and invited him to call on us when he came down to the camp. He seemed a bit puzzled by my cordiality, as if he suspected that I was attempting to slip something over on him, for he grew more guarded and curt as we talked.

My Indian was ready to go down, had been for several days, but since there had been no one there to prod him on he had not started. I went down with him, and by evening we had him loaded down to the gunwales with fifty sacks of rutabagas. We saw him off, after making him promise to make at least three trips the next day, and then we went back up the hill, all three of us more light at heart about those rutabagas than we had been for a long time. It was a splendid, calm evening, and as a south wind had just blown itself out, it was reasonable to hope that several days of calm weather would follow before a new storm blew up.

Mr. Emory from Skagway came down that same evening, bringing his wife with him. The McRaes, our next neighbours, had moved to town for the winter, so the Emorys made their camp over there, a mile away by Flat Bay. Emory was a tall man, well over six feet, and as he strode over the beach, his long gun across his arm, his keen gray eyes looking out from under grizzled eyebrows, he looked more like an old-time pioneer than the proprietor of a drug-store. He wore high-topped shoe-packs, and a duck hunting-coat with a sheepskin vest beneath, and looked very capable, and at home in the woods. He came up to see us at our cabin, ate supper with us, and, I think, came away with a better opinion of us than he had expected.

During our talk there in our cabin he told us that, in his opinion, we were wasting our time at Viking's Cove. The trail up from the beach had impressed him greatly. It was difficult, strewn with rocks, and very steep in places, and he was amazed at the pile of lumber I had carried up and piled outside around the new structure.

"The amount of energy you are expending here," he said several times, "just to make a home for yourselves would make you wealthy if applied anywhere else."

I argued with him that to have a home where you wanted it and be poor, was better than to live where you didn't want to and be rich. Besides, I was young and strong, with energy to spare, and the more I expended, the more I would gain. When I first came here I could only take fifty pounds up the trail at one time, and then I had to rest several times on the way, but now I could take a hundred pounds and make it with ease, without resting once. Marian chipped in and told how hard it had been for her at first, but that now she could run up the trail without getting winded. Emory was aghast, but he still insisted that we were wasting our time. He implied that while we were young we should prepare for the time when we were not able to do these things. When I asked him if a good solid home and a cleared ranch with meadows, pastures, and fields were not preparations for old age, he replied that this was not a farming country. He had waited twenty years for the country to boom, and instead had witnessed the population dwindle year by year instead of growing. Other parts of Alaska had gone ahead, but Haines and Skagway had had their day of fame, and were now emblems of the past, only to be known in histories of the gold rushes.

His outlook was gloomy. The pall that had fallen on his town since the early days when the population of Skagway was counted in thousands lay heavy on him. I tried to explain that it was only during the last few years that farmers had been settling and taking up

the land, and that they represented a stable, self-supporting population. The days of the gold rushes were almost over, and the people who came now, came to settle down as we were doing. Gradually the country would develop, and I expected the day to come when all of South-Eastern Alaska would be as thickly settled as Sweden and Norway. He did not think so. He had waited twenty years. Perhaps if I had waited as long I might also have been discouraged.

The next morning was cold, with a fine snow driving down from the north. Oscar's bed up in the attic was covered with it, for the seedy grains had filtered through the shakes of the roof. The thermometer had dropped to fifteen, and it looked as if winter had come in all seriousness.

While we were eating breakfast someone knocked on the door. It was our Indian. He was wet, cold, and hungry, for his engine had broken down, and he had been on the water all night. He had barely made the shelter of Flat Bay before the storm broke loose out of the north. After he had eaten, Oscar and I went with him to the boat in Flat Bay. The rutabagas on deck were frozen. We took them ashore and stacked them on the beach. Perhaps McRae could use them for his pigs, but they were no good to us any longer. The sacks inside the cabin were all right, for there was a little coal-stove in there, and as long as the fuel lasted the cabin could be kept warm enough.

The three of us laboured over the engine all forenoon, and took everything else apart, before we found that the timer had a broken washer. Once the trouble was found it was soon fixed, and when the whole affair was put together again she putt-putted right along.

After taking us ashore the Indian hoisted anchor and headed out of the bay into the fiord, bucking the north wind to Haines. By the time Oscar and I got back to the ranch it was evening, and the thermometer had dropped to zero. We knew then that our three hundred and fifty sacks of rutabagas were freezing solid down there on the beach. We had lost out completely on that score, and I blame myself heartily for not having stayed to see that they were shipped. It was a considerable mishap, almost a calamity, for we would not be able this fall to catch up with those ever-mounting debts. The price of everything was constantly going up, too, and as we now had nothing to sell we were in a difficult predicament.

For the first time since Marian and I had been married we were having really bad luck. Losing the sluice-box up on Kingdom Come had not been so bad, for that had been a game. But this was not a game at all. The rutabagas represented at least two months of hard work; they were our living, our sustenance. We should have to go deeper into debt for the winter's food. With nothing stable ahead to look forward to, it seemed to me for a while that I was a crushing failure. I had failed to make a living for my wife. What would men think of me? Would the stores refuse me groceries for the winter? What was to become of Marian, whom I had brought up here, now that I did not seem to be able to support her? Was it all a mistake? Was I not man enough to support a wife? Terrible doubts assailed me that night as I lay awake listening to the blizzard howling through the spruce tops around the cabin, and roaring in the forest on the hillside across the lake. "You are a failure! You

are a failure!" the wind seemed to screech at me, and I groaned aloud in my misery.

When morning came my fears were gone, and Oscar and I set to work anew, felling and hewing trees, building the walls of the new cabin.

Oscar had been unusually quiet that morning, and I wondered how greatly he was disappointed over the loss of the crop. When we were a good way from the cabin, he laid his hand on my shoulder, and said abruptly: "I was to have been paid out of that crop, wasn't I?"

"Yes, but I'll——"

"Well, the crop is gone." Oscar stopped me with a gesture. "You don't owe me anything. I was willing to take chances on getting paid out of the crop, and I lost just the same as you. You don't owe me anything."

Once again Oscar's generosity left me floundering for words. All I could say was: "Oscar, you're a damned fine fellow!"

When ten days had passed the new cabin loomed large in the widened clearing that had been made by cutting down the trees to build it. The rafters had been raised, and most of the shake roof had been nailed on. Oscar and I had made the shingles ourselves. We had gone out into the woods and found a straight-grained hemlock-tree, from which we split enough shakes in two days to cover the whole roof. To Marian that seemed a crowning achievement, the final wonder.

The winter weather had softened again, and on a clear morning in the beginning of December Oscar and I went to town to see about a wood contract that was to be awarded by the military authorities at Fort Seward.

The Skagway outfit on our beach had discontinued work, and had gone away; and since they had the right to the timber, we could not touch it, so we had to look elsewhere. The contract had already been let to a man in town, but we got a subcontract from him for fifty cords, and as there seemed to be chances for other woodcutting in town, we decided to break camp at Viking's Cove and come to the little village for the winter. I hurried back the same day, for Marian had not been feeling her best in the morning, and I did not like to leave her alone when it was so cold.

It was dark when I reached the cabin, and very cold. Marian sat huddled by the stove. She was not well—I could see that with a glance, but there was a strange, happy shining in her eyes as I put my arms about her in greeting.

"My dear, my dear," she said softly; "your wish is coming true."

"Oh, Marian!" I whispered. "Not that?" And my throat contracted for the pain of the love that was mine.

"Yes, Svend."

I held her close to me. It was too wonderful to be true. All the love, and joy, and happiness welled up in me seeking expression, and I could say nothing, only hold her close to my heart there in our little cabin. She whom I loved more than I could understand, who was ever a beautiful, wonderful companion to me, was to be the mother to my child! I was awed to silence by the thought of it.

We lay awake long that night, thinking and talking of this new life that was growing from our love. Again and again it came to me that I must be good and gentle,

generous and humble, to be worthy of this great happiness.

Before daylight we made ready to go to town. I rolled our blankets tightly, and packed two suitcases with clothing. Then we bade good-bye to our little loghouse, our new loghouse, and the lake, and we both wept a bit, for there was a chance that we might never see our home again.

A CLOSE CALL FROM DROWNING

CHAPTER V

A CLOSE CALL FROM DROWNING

THEN, with the pack on my shoulders and a suitcase in each hand, I led the way over the frozen snow through the woods. Marian carried nothing, for she was not well; there was a long trail ahead of us, and I felt she would do well to get there without packing a load. The wind had not died down in the night, but rather had increased in violence, and it had grown colder. The snow through the woods was frozen hard on top all along the trail, so hard that we could walk on it, never breaking through, and we made rapid progress.

When we reached the upper end of the bay, where there was shelter from the wind under the thick forest, it was not so cold. The difficult travelling along the ice-packed beach kept us warm now that we were out of the wind.

Over the trail through the woods we again had good walking on the level snow. Here the great frozen spruce-trees groaned, creaked, and whined where one tree ground against another. The wind swept over the tops of them, sending down showers of needles and twigs, till in places the white snow was almost covered. There was a soughing roar above, and the noise of the screeching, grinding trees was like a thousand voices of protest against the storm. Marian and I did not protest, however, but walked on, inspired and awed by

the immensity of the elements; happy that we could move on, and did not have to stay there in the woods freezing, creaking, swayed this way and that by the cruel winter winds.

At Litnikoff Bay on the Chilkat side of the peninsula we stopped at the cabin of O'Brien, our second neighbour. He insisted on giving us a bite to eat, and urged us to stay overnight. The storm was raging out there on the Chilkat Inlet, which was all white with foam and iceflakes, and steaming from the contact of the water with the colder air. Great chunks of ice were being piled up on the beach by the rolling breakers, for the bay faced to the north, and got the full sweep of ten miles of inlet. O'Brien had two sea-gulls in his cabin which were unable to fly because they had rheumatism from the cold, he said. He had had an awful time, he told us, trying to keep his cat from killing them, until finally he had locked the cat outside in the cold. By this time Marian felt well and strong, her cheeks were flaming pink and her eyes sparkling blue, eager for the excitement of the battle with the wind and the icy beaches. So after we had eaten and laughed at his Irish drollery, we set out again, heading into the storm along the beach with his "God bless you" ringing in our ears, and his hand-clasp and friendliness warming our spirits against the struggle with the north.

And it was a struggle. There was no trail along this first five miles of boulder-strewn beach, only ice-covered rocks on the points, and ice-flaked gravel beaches in the coves. The wind had full sweep at us, and it was fierce and terrible in its fury, sending the foam from on top of the whitecaps and breakers along the beach flying through the air against us till our

clothes were covered with flakes of ice. But it was fun at that, at least for Marian, for I could see her flaming cheeks and hear her joyous laugh when the severest points of obstacles were overcome. My spirits, however, were somewhat subdued by the hundred odd pounds of blanket-roll and suitcases I carried.

We reached "The creek"—it has no other name—which runs out of Lily Lake and empties into the inlet in a small cove where grows a grove of tall spruce-trees, and where there is shelter from the north. Here I dropped my load, and made a fire at the foot of a great tree, and we made tea, ate sandwiches, and rested. We were half-way, and it was about noon.

There are few things as pleasant as camping on the trail with a healthy fatigue, a fire, and food. I only know of one thing more delightful, and that is to have these things and have one's beloved to share them. Complete happiness was ours as we sat there close together before our crackling fire. The storm raged over the fiord and up on the mountain-side, but in our cosy nook only an occasional gust of wind came down to disturb the evenly burning fire, and we heeded nothing but our contentment, and the fierce beauty of the winter scene we gazed upon.

From the creek there was a trail leading up over a promontory which could not be passed along the beach on account of the cliffs rising straight from the deep water. It was a hard climb with a pack, and it warmed me up till I had to loosen up my mackinaw and take off my fur cap. There was no wind on the upward grade, but when we reached the top we got the full sweep of it again, and being warm I forgot to put my

cap back on, till Marian looked at me startled, and exclaimed: "Why, Svend, your ears are all white at the top, and the rest of your face is as red as can be!"

I dropped my suitcase and felt my ears. They were stiff and lifeless to the touch. I dropped to my knees and rubbed them with snow, and it was not long before I could feel them. It took some of the joy out of life when the blood began to force its way through the chilled tissues. I had been in time, and they would only swell, and hurt, and itch, not rot and drop off in pieces; and though the pain that shot through them was severe, I was glad that Marian had seen them, and, without knowing the cause, had exclaimed at their strange appearance. I explained then that when it was so cold she would have to look out for her nose and ears, as frost crept on one insidiously, and there was no pain to tell of its presence.

When we struck the beach again it was where there were no more boulders, but long level sand and gravel bars for several miles instead. Here the wind had swept the flat beach clean of snow, and it made good walking, but here, too, the wind struck in its full fury straight down from its source behind the glaciers, and it picked up sand and sticks and small pebbles, and drove them along till we could not face them, and had to walk backwards to keep ahead at all. It was slow progress, for we were both getting tired, and the three or four miles to town seemed a long, long way. Marian's nose and cheeks were bitten here too, for when the fatigue drives away the excitement, the blood does not circulate so freely, and she had not yet the blood of the north that runs thickly and warmly to the surface of the skin when the need arises. I rubbed

her face with snow, and drew up the scarf McRae had given her till only her eyes showed; and she kept it so till we got out of the terrible wind and into the woods again, where the road led across the peninsula through Fort Seward to Haines.

Oscar had rented a house from Martin Madsen, the rent consisting of just living there while Marty was in Juneau. In a day we had established our new home, stored up our groceries and wood, and then Oscar and I went at our woodcutting.

It was not an easy job, nor one to get rich from, for the days were short, and we had two miles to walk to and from work. We started before daylight in the mornings, and did not get home till after dark, and at that it was a good day in which we worked seven hours. We took a lunch along, but as the snow was deep, and it was windy and very cold, and we were pinched for time anyway, we never bothered about building a fire at noon. The lunches were usually frozen stiff, but once in our stomachs, with us pulling on the saws or splitting and piling the four-foot lengths, they soon thawed out and gave us warmth and strength.

When we worked in the woods Oscar and I hardly ever talked, for both of us were anxious to get as much work done as possible. He was the best companion to work with that I had ever met. Having been raised on a farm in Blekinge, Sweden, and having worked at all sorts of things since he had come to America, he was very efficient, and knew just how to get the most work done the easiest way. He was a compactly built, medium-sized man of the blond type, with ruddy skin, and even white teeth behind firm, well-shaped lips.

Any stranger looking at him would know instantly that he was a Scandinavian, and that he was an honest man. While he was silent when at work in the woods, he was sociability itself in the evening when supper was eaten and we sat around the fire. Then in his funny Swedish way he would tell of his life in the old country: of the farm customs, of the dances, and of his mother's manifold household duties. Also there were stories of the army over there, and many other interesting things. At other times Marian read aloud to us, while Oscar and I would lie back in our chairs, or darned our socks, and mended our clothes, that were everlastingly being torn in the woods.

Again the idea of writing a story of Alaska with Norse mythology as its base began to work in my mind. If the topography of a country, its methods of agriculture, climate, and such forces were all factors in shaping the manners of life, religions, and habits of men, might not Alaska a thousand years from now be inhabited by a people like that of the Scandinavian countries? The topography was much the same, though on a vastly larger scale. The Norsemen had had to struggle with the elements, so they had given personality to them, calling them gods, demons, giants, fairies, and gnomes. I imagined the Alaskan people struggling thus for thirty generations with the ever-present onslaught of Nature. Thirty generations would make a difference in the thoughts and habits of men. Alaskan men would grow tall and blond like the Vikings of old, and the story that I decided to write was of these North American Vikings. They, too, would give personality to the elements; and as they originally had been mostly of Norse extraction,

it would not be remarkable if the legends of the old Northland survived, and became a part of the superstitions of the new northland. It was a fascinating idea, and I got up every morning long before the others to write on it. I had no hope of getting it published, for my English was too faulty, but I would write, anyway, while the inspiration lasted, and some day perhaps when my English had developed I would dig up this manuscript and rewrite the story. At first it was only going to be a short story, but as the idea grew I decided that it would have to be a novelette. The plot continued to grow, however, until it involved adventure, politics, religion, and war; and I realized that it must of necessity be a book. Every morning after the others were up and ready to eat the oatmeal, and the sour-dough hot-cakes that we always had for breakfast when Oscar was with us, I would read aloud what I had written, and they would say that it was good stuff, and became so enthusiastic and argumentative over the plot that they begged me to stay home and finish the book so they could end their suspense.

However, it was slow work. A thousand words during a morning was my maximum, and some mornings I could think of nothing at all to write about. During such mornings I lost all my confidence. I had nothing to write. It was all a mistake. Who was I to think that I could do what thousands of others better educated than I had tried and failed to accomplish? My English was rotten. I lacked the words to express the few thoughts I had, and often they escaped me before I could get them down, or while I was fingering the dictionary frantically searching for the words that I needed. On such mornings I bemoaned my

fate. I was married now—I had no longer a chance for an education—I had to work all the time.

However, such mornings of abject depression were few. Usually I scribbled away enthusiastically, sometimes a lot of rot, but sometimes there were good ideas that, though poorly written, made an impression on Marian and Oscar, and caused them to wonder if after all I might not become a writer some day. The thing that encouraged us most was the fact that my English grew better as I continued to write. I was going ahead, and if I kept at it I might perhaps succeed some time. I would take time out of my hours of sleep to write in the mornings and read with Marian in the evenings. She was glad to help me gain a knowledge of her mother-tongue.

Christmas came and went, and the days grew longer. Our fifty cords of wood were cut, and there came three weeks when we had nothing to do, in which we ate up the little we had saved from the other job. Marty came back, and we moved three miles out from the Chilkat road to the Clayton ranch, where Clayton, Oscar, and I entered into a wood company. Oscar and I were to cut the wood, and Clayton was to haul it to town and sell it. Wood sold for six dollars a cord, and we were to split even. That gave Oscar and me four dollars a cord, which was good pay as far as it went, but the business was limited, and it was not long before we had a lot of wood on hand that we had no sale for, and some that we had sold to people who either could not or would not pay for it. We managed to make a little better than a living at it, and when April came and Oscar went up the river to work in the mines, and we were ready to move back to the

nch, we owed fifty dollars less than we had when e had come in to cut wood. We needed supplies, owever, to last us till July, when the fishing season pened, and I dreaded asking for credit again, since I ad failed to meet my obligations the year before. I lt that the storekeepers would be loath to supply me nce more. It had to be done, though, so I went to e man that I liked best, one who had been most iendly to us, and ordered a list of groceries. He put em up for me, and they amounted to seventy dollars. t was a much smaller pile than I could have bought r seventy dollars a year or two before, but there was o way to get around that. I asked him to charge it my account, and he said he couldn't do it. Oh, I as ashamed! My spirit sank so low that I could ardly look up. He told me that he had obligations meet too, and that he had to cut me off. I bowed y head and started to walk out, but he called me back.

"Svend," he said, and put his hand on my shoulder, I know that you are a hard worker, and will pay hen you have the money, but a ranch up here has ever paid yet. If I were you, I'd go up the river to ork a season or two, and then try it again. It's not ecause I don't trust you. I know you are good pay, ut I need some money bad myself, for I have debts oo."

I said that I was sorry, and was about to leave gain, when he said that if I wanted those groceries I ould take them, but that this was the last time he ould give me credit on this account. I took them, for seemed to have lost all pride, and I was afraid to try ne of the other stores. I wanted to spend one more ummer on the ranch, and we must have food. I did

not tell Marian about my disgrace, but kept it to myself. It would do no good to share my misery with her. It was enough that one of us should be ashamed. I determined to work like blazes, and I did, but the thing that the storekeeper had said about a ranch never paying yet in this part of the country somehow took the tuck out of me. It killed completely my inspiration to write, that had been lagging the latter part of the winter after we found that we were not making headway financially, chopping wood. I worked like an automaton from early morning till late at night, grubbing and pulling roots and stumps, but not with the fire and ambition of the year before. I had no time to write, or rather I had no energy left, so the manuscript lay half written and mostly forgotten. It was of no account, anyway. Who was I to be able to write a book? Toward evening, when I had swung the axe and grub-hoe all day, when my back was getting stiff and my hands cramped, I doubted that I should ever amount to anything, and I smiled in grim irony when I thought of the high flights my ambition had taken, and the self-esteem that I had entertained during the winter when I had worked on that book. I was indeed a fine scrub to be thinking of becoming a writer! What did I know to write about? It seemed that my head was empty, and that all I was good for was to grub, grub, grub, and I did not even like that any longer. I had lost faith in myself and was miserable.

All was not toil and pessimism, however, that spring. The hooters began to call from the hillsides, robins and other song-birds came back from the south, filling the woods with song, telling the joyous world

of their love. I was usually happy at night when I was with Marian, and warm, strengthening food had cheered me up. It would never do to let her know that I had lost faith in myself. Sometimes she read aloud to me, and other times, when I was not too tired from my work in the clearing, we would walk around the lake, listening to the hooting grouse and the song-birds, and watching the new leaves as they unfolded. At first before the ice went out we walked around on it, because it was easier, but one night we both broke through, and had a hard time getting out of the icy water on to the porous, breaking ice again. After that we walked around the lake on the path through the woods that I had chopped the first year I had been there alone by Odin's Lake, and that in my loneliness I had named "Lovers' Lane." Or sometimes we both went out after supper and worked on the new cabin. We finished the roof together and nailed the floor on upstairs. Then we put up the partition that divided living-room and kitchen, and made cupboards and tables as Marian directed. This was her domain, and she had planned and replanned that kitchen all winter. It took a good deal of thinking, for here in the north, where we buy a summer's supplies at one time, there must be room to stow away a good deal of food of many different kinds in handy places where it is easy to get at. Then there were windows and doors to put in place, a bed to make, and a wide porch outside.

I went around Point Seduction to the other side of Chilkat Peninsula where there was an old cannery, from which I salvaged a lot of lumber. The plant had been abandoned years before, and Brother Page, one of our neighbours, had homesteaded the site. Early

in the spring he had told me to come and get some of that lumber when I needed it. So on one of the first days in May, when there was no lumber left to pack up from our beach, I got the skiff ready to row around the point, fourteen miles to the cove where the old cannery stood. It looked stormy, and Marian was worried, and clung to me when I said good-bye.

"Oh, Svend, be careful," she entreated. "I couldn't bear to lose you!"

I assured her that there was no danger, as I would follow the shore around, and could always reach land in a pinch. Her intuition told her that a storm was brewing, and that there was danger, but she was brave and did not ask me to stay. I left her standing there in the doorway—a lovely picture framed in the brown, green, and silver of the log walls. I, too, felt that there was a storm coming. The clouds hung low on the mountain-side and the air had an ominous shade, but I had determined to go, and I would not heed the warning.

It was calm, and I rowed with long steady strokes, past Viking's Point and down the fiord towards Point Seduction. The water looked oily black in its calmness. Nothing disturbed it except the ripple I made with the boat and oars, and that disappeared quickly a little way astern. The mountains and woods looked dark with gloomy, brooding shadows in the indentations and canyons, as if depressing spirits were hiding there, waiting for some inevitable disaster to gloat over. Tall dead spruce-trees with crooked white branches loomed white against the dark-green forest, and they reminded me of skeletons of men and their hopes. Great fantastic dreams men would plan and

labour on, and death would leave but the skeleton of all their hopes. An eagle flew swiftly along the cliffs of the beach. It came close and glided over my skiff, staring intently at me from black, piercing eyes set in white feathers. Its bright yellow beak and claws looked cruel, but when I pointed my oar at it like a gun, it swerved in a flurry and flew away up on the mountain-side. I could hear the dull roar of a waterfall across the fiord, where the wide white path it made, a thousand feet from cliff to cliff, looked still as death, and not at all like rushing water. Everything seemed unreal, and I was so depressed by the immobility of it all, that I began to wish for something to happen. I had not very long to wait. The clouds that had hung low on the forest-covered mountain-sides began to rise like a great curtain on a world-wide stage. From high up on the hill I imagined I could hear a dull, soughing roar. The clouds began to drift towards the north, then they began to race, and the roar of the wind in the upper strata of the mountains mounted higher and more threatening. I was thrilled and forgot my worries. There was less than a mile to the point. Could I make it, I would have the wind behind me on the Chilkat side of the peninsula, and I would fly along. I laid my full weight on the oars.

A black spot showed on the glistening still water to the south. It was a puff of wind. It widened and spread over the whole width of the fiord, and with a tongue like a blunted spear, rushed upon me and enveloped me. It was only a puff, and not a very fierce one, but I knew that it was but the beginning, for up on the side of the hill I could see the tree-tops bend to the force of the wind and hear the steady, menacing

roar. Small white dots of foam appeared out in the middle of the fiord, and then the full force of the wind reached me, for I came out of the shelter of the last rocky point, and was at the end of the peninsula, where a high promontory juts out cape-like, dividing the tides that come rushing in and go rushing out into two separate channels—the Chilkoot and the Chilkat.

At first there were no waves to speak of, but as the storm increased, and the sea had more time to mount, they grew larger and larger. When I came to Twin Bays, that lie exposed to the south with a hundred miles' sweep of water direct from Icy Straits, there was a terrible sea. The tide, going out, formed a tide-rip there across the bay, along which the waves rose high in the air in long rows of white breakers. I had to go through them or land in one of the bays, but I wanted to go on, and I needed to keep a mile or so away from the beach, so that in case I should ship water I could bail it out again without danger of drifting on to the beach. I gave the boat a thorough inspection. The rowlocks were tied on, my blanket-roll was secure in the stern, as was the rope I had brought to lash the raft together. I gripped the oars firmly and drove the boat into the tide-rip. It was only a short distance that was dangerous, perhaps twenty feet or less, and I was sure I could make it. I eluded the first breaker by backing water and missing the break of the wave, but my skiff lost headway, and before I could get a firm grip on the water again with my oars, the next wave was upon me, breaking over the stern of the boat, half filling it with water. I was close to the other side of the bad space, and I took one more sweep with the oars, driving the water-logged craft ahead before an-

other wave broke over it and swamped it completely. It was full of water and sinking under my weight. There was only one thing to do, and that was to lie down in the water, and hope to drift ashore.

I had presence of mind enough to hang on to the oars, and as I lay there I pulled them in and stuck them under the seats. This kept me busy for some time, but after that I had nothing to do. I was out of tide-rip, but I was swamped and about a half-mile from the nearest beach. I doubted if I could swim that far in the cold water that was already beginning to numb the ends of my fingers. I would drift ashore in time—everything that floats in an Alaskan fiord drifts ashore in time—but would it be soon enough? I knew that I could not stand the cold of that water very long. Many times I had gone swimming in it; and even in the warmest summer days it would numb me if I stayed in very long. This was early spring. There were still occasional glaciers at the feet of streams in shaded coves where the sun had not got in its work yet; and the rivers from which a great deal of the water came were as yet snow- and ice-bound. I thought of Marian over there in the cabin by the lake, and I knew that every blast of wind that swept across the lake, moaning through the trees, was like a stab in her heart. A dreadful fear gripped me. Could it be that I should never see her again? Could it be that I must die now, and leave her? "Oh, God, God!" I cried. "I don't want to die! I love her, and I want to live!"

The waves rolled on unheedingly, heaving the sunken skiff up and down. I was lying still on the bottom, mostly afloat by my own buoyancy; and the cold was gradually penetrating my body and

stiffening my joints. It seemed that I was drifting closer to the beach, but I was a long way off yet. I kept thinking that this was my last hour, that I should never, never see Marian again! It was maddening. I would surely die if I kept that up. I must do something. Rather die struggling to live than this way. I would swim for the beach. To stay with the boat would be folly, for I could never survive. I carefully bent double, and tried to untie the strings of my shoepacks. My fingers were too stiff. Then I tried to get my knife out, but I could not get my hand in my pocket. I had waited too long. If I waited much longer I would not be able to move my arms. I slid out the oars from under the seat, and with them rolled over the side of the boat. They would counteract the heavy rubber packs. Then I struck out for the shore. The oars bothered me, but I was afraid to let them go. It was an agony to move, for my joints were stiff and aching, but it was the only way to life. Constantly, when I was not ducking and spluttering from the water, there came to me an overpowering desire to let it be and lie still. It was as if an evil spirit, bent on my destruction, had cast its spell over me. I fought off the deadening drowsiness that made me cease to swim when the tops of the waves broke over me. I must have one fixed purpose now, and only one—to reach the rocky beach that I could see not so very far away when a wave raised me high. I did not think of anything else, for it helped the drowsiness when I let my mind wander from my object. The beach! The beach! I must think of nothing but the beach. It became an obsession with me, and I strained my smarting eyes for the shore. It no longer hurt when my

hands struck the oars, for there was no longer any feeling in them. It seemed as if my feet were not there any longer, but I continued to kick my legs. The numbness that was growing in my limbs seemed to possess my mind also. It became more and more difficult to think of the beach. All that was left was a desire to lie quiet. There was nothing so much to struggle for. Why swim when it was not necessary? The oars would keep me afloat. I wanted to sleep.

My knees struck against something hard. My dead hands and stiff arms were jarred. I was rolled over and over. The shaking up stirred me to thought. I had reached the beach, and it remained but for me to get out of the waves that were washing over me and banging me against the rocks. A wave threw me over a black rock, and receded, leaving the water streaming around me. The next wave came rushing over the rock, trying to take me back with it. I struggled to my hands and knees, and crawled over another rock. The next wave rushed over me, and nearly knocked me down, but it had not strength enough to drag me back. I crawled on, and with the crawling came pain. "The price of life is pain," I thought dully, as the blood began to circulate in my veins.

Getting to my feet, I staggered around on the beach. I realized that it had been a close call, and I decided to say nothing about it to anyone, if I could only get hold of the boat. I beat my arms and looked out over the turbulent water. The skiff was not so very far away. It must have drifted closer to the beach. The top current must be going with the wind, I thought, for I knew the tide was going out. The ache in my fingers made me swear, but I knew that in a short while it

would cease. I tramped up and down on the beach until the blood was rushing to my hands and feet, making them feel burning and swollen.

Then I went up into the edge of the woods, gathered a lot of dead spruce limbs and started a bonfire of driftwood in under the trees out of the wind. I would at least be warm while waiting for the skiff to drift ashore. I took off my clothes, wrung the water out of them, and put them on again. They would soon dry. I was terribly hungry, but there was no help for that. I would have to wait for the boat, where I had a lunch rolled up in my pack. In the meantime it was very warm and comfortable there by the fire, and I dozed a bit with my back up against a big tree. When I woke I could see the skiff no longer. I ran along the beach, around the point that was the beginning of Twin Bays. There it was, high and dry. It had gone through the tide-rip again, close to the shore, and then drifted in to the beach. I took my blanket-roll out, and got the lunch, which had been protected from the water by the heavy canvas in which the pack was tightly rolled. After eating, I rolled the water out of the little craft. If I started out again from the bay I should have to pass through that tide-rip again, and it was rougher than ever by the look of it from the shore.

Having no stomach for that, I dragged the boat along the beach over the rocky point to where I had come ashore. It was sheltered there, and after finding the oars near by, and making the boat shipshape, I set out once more, and reached the cannery cove an hour later, as if nothing had happened. Martin Madsen and Brother Page were there, and they were aghast at my coming around Point Seduction with only a

measly, cranky skiff. I tried to tell them that it had been calm when I had started, but they shook their heads and said that I must be crazy. I was pretty tired, but I did not want to let them know it, so I set to work gathering lumber around the buildings and off the old wharf, throwing it all down on the beach where the tide had gone far out. I made it into a raft, and by ten o'clock that evening I had about five thousand feet of lumber rafted and lashed together. The tide floated it then, and I towed it out into the cove and anchored it in plenty of water for low tide. Marty had told me that the cannery boat *Emma Jean* was going around the point to Haines early next morning, so I ran over to the Chilkat cannery on Litnikoff Bay, and asked them to call in at the old cannery cove for my raft. They said they would, and I went back to my raft, unrolled my blankets, and got a few hours' sleep before the whistle of the *Emma Jean* woke me up. She towed me, raft, boat and all, round to Viking's Cove.

I told no one about that adventure for a long time, but one day when I unguardedly exclaimed that I considered the skiff unsafe in really rough weather, Marian asked me to tell her all about that trip; and when I admitted that I had swamped and nearly drowned, she forbade my going out of the bay in that skiff again. That was right, for I was married, and had no right to play with danger and stake my life whenever I felt in the mood. But who would want to trade one's loved ones and dependents for the mere freedom to gamble?

A SON IS BORN

CHAPTER VI

A SON IS BORN

By the middle of May we had our crop in, with a large new piece of land planted with rutabagas drilled in between the stumps. It had been an early spring, and the garden was already showing faint green lines where radishes and lettuce were breaking through. Work on the new road was started again, and one day the whole gang came up to Odin's Lake and asked us to come over to work—Marian to cook, and me to work on the road. I was glad to get a chance to relieve the strained condition of our finances; and when Marian heard the sad tale of their experiences without a cook, she decided that she might as well help them out until they could get another cook. Thus we moved camp again, making a home for ourselves in a tent on McRae's ranch, where the road camp had been established. This would give us some money to pay the storekeepers, and also against the coming of our baby, besides helping to make the road we needed so badly; so we were satisfied, and worked hard. Marian worked only a couple of weeks; then a girl from town came out and relieved her. But I worked until ten days before the fishing season opened, and it was time I began to get things ready for the salmon run. I got my nets and fish-boat from the cannery, and as the sockeyes were jumping in the bay, I set out a net, and caught a

couple of dozen fish, which we canned in glass jars for our own use during the coming winter. I also bought a scythe in town and began mowing wild hay along the beaches, bundling it up when it was cured, and packing it up the trail to the new cabin, where I stored it in the room upstairs. We had decided to get a cow next fall or next spring if we possibly could, for we considered milk a necessity when there would be a child in the home.

Then I had the potato-field to cultivate, and the rutabagas to thin out, besides taking care of our garden. There was lots of work to do, and our finances had improved, so I had not much time or cause to worry. I never went up the trail from the beach without packing a load of lumber or hay, or something useful to our home up there on the hill, and it was amazing to see the lumber piles grow around the new cabin and the hay accumulate upstairs. By the 1st of July fishing began in earnest. I kept three nets in the water with no difficulty, for the season started well with pleasant weather, no seaweed, and a few fish. I got from fifteen to twenty-five salmon every day, and that was not bad, since the absence of seaweed gave me time to work in the garden and get in my hay. I was usually alone now, for Marian had many things to do fixing the new home into which we had moved, and she wanted to have everything shipshape when the baby arrived. Sometimes, however, she would cook a dinner and bring it down to the beach, and then we would sit in the warm sunshine on the clean gravel, leaning against a great white log that had been bleached by the weather of many seasons. Here we would eat while we watched the beautiful fiord with its interesting life, the moun-

tains round about, and listened, when it was calm, to the distant rumble of the waterfalls on the other side of the water. One such day Marian came down with a pot of Spanish rice, bread and butter, and a lot of lettuce and radishes from the garden. It was a lovely day with a slight draught from the north that made faint ripples on the bay and fiord. The sky was clear, and the sun beat down on us there on the beach, making us warm and comfortable.

"Oh, Svend," Marian sighed after we had sat in silence for a while looking at the wonders about us, "I do dread having to leave you and all these precious things to go into town."

We had decided that she ought to go into town two weeks before the baby was to be born.

"I would be so glad if it were practicable for the baby to be born down here with just you and me."

"Yes," I said, and took her hand, "I wish so too; but we know nothing about that sort of thing, Marian, and we can't afford to run any risks."

"Yes, yes, I'll go, Svend; but you and I will be very lonesome, no matter how kind everybody is. After all, we are all each other has, Svend."

"Yes, dearest, I can hardly bear to be away from you, but I can't see how it can be helped. We must be sure this year not to fail, and the only thing for me to do is to be constantly ready for the big run of fish when it comes. If we do the thing we feel is right and work hard, I know that God is good and that things will come out all right for us."

"Of course, Svend," she said, as she nestled closer. It really is silly and most ungrateful for anyone with such kind neighbours as we have to be worried or lone-

some. Still, I do wish that the baby could be born in its own home."

"So do I, Marian."

We sat in silence and close together for a while. "I am going around to Bismarck's Cove for some hay this afternoon," I said. "Do you want to come along?"

She rose promptly. "I always want to go anywhere with you."

"All right. We'll go, then." And I stacked the plates up in plain sight on the big log so we would not forget them when we came back.

After dragging the skiff down to the water's edge, I handed Marian in and we rowed out to the Colombia river-boat. I raised the mast, cast off from the buoy, hoisted the big sail, stuck the sprit in, and we sailed slowly round Viking's Point, down the two or three miles to Bismarck's Cove. There I cast anchor, and we rowed ashore in the skiff. We set to work rolling the wild pease and beach rye, that I had cut several days before, into bales, piling them on the beach.

I had expected the breeze to change to the south with high tide, but instead it increased from the north, and by the time we had all the hay baled and on board the big boat there was a stiff breeze sweeping down the fiord. It was warm weather, however, and we were not afraid of the waves, so we set sail again and started out across the fiord. I would make one long beat, holding close to the wind on one tack till I reached the other side, and then I would be almost certain to make Viking's Cove on the other tack. When we reached the middle of the fiord, a great Canadian steamer of the Grand Trunk Line passed us close by, and the passengers swarmed to the rail, waved to us, and took

snapshots with cameras. We felt quite adventurous there in the boat, a small tossing shell when it was compared with that great steady craft with its many passengers and its belching smoke-stacks.

We were just through wallowing in the wake of the large boat, when Marian caught me by the arm and said: "Let's hurry home, Svend. Something is the matter. I believe the baby is coming soon."

I turned about, and headed for Viking's Cove. We could make it all right if the wind held the same, but I had not calculated on the tide that was flowing out rapidly. I was afraid to make another tack, so I held for the cove below ours, a half-mile to the south. I could anchor there, and we could make the rest of the way in the skiff.

The wind grew stronger, and it seemed to me that it was personal in its attack on us. It veered and changed, and came in puffs that tried to turn our boat over. I grew angry at its perversity and shook my fist in its face, swearing long and vehemently. That was hard for Marian to listen to, but I was desperately anxious to get her to the shore and to our home up there by the lake; and the wind seemed like an evil spirit that laughed wickedly at my anxiety, and tried to keep me from getting my precious cargo to safety. Marian's pain grew more severe, and I could do nothing but swear at the wind in my perplexity and fear.

Finally we reached the cove in spite of the wind, and after quickly lowering the sail and anchoring, I helped her into the skiff. For a moment we discussed making a nest of hay in the edge of the woods, but we decided it would be easier to go home now, and I rowed her around the point to Viking's Cove. The wind attacked

us again, tearing at the boat, sending showers of spray over its bow when I drove it into the choppy sea; but I did not swear now, for I was doing something, and could spend my pent-up energy to better advantage pulling on the oars, setting the wind at naught. We reached our cove, and by slow stages mounted the trail to the cabin. The wind died out as soon as we had reached the beach, as if hopelessly giving up its attempt to hold us back.

Then there came over me a great worry and unrest. Marian was suffering, and I did not know what to do. I wandered aimlessly around in the cabin, worrying, and blaming myself for this calamity that seemed to have befallen us. I was desperate and heart-sick, and Marian's cries of anguish stabbed me through and through. She cried for me to pray for help for her, and in desperation I prayed, and praying, grew calmer. Something seemed to tell me: "The pain must go on, but there is other work for you to do."

I prepared the bed for Marian, brought down a big box in which we kept the baby's things, put hay in the bottom of it, making a nest for the little one who was coming to us. I put water on the stove to heat, and sat by Marian's bedside, holding her hands and soothing her. Great peace settled over the house, as if calm, loving spirits were hovering near. Even the cat walked around soft-pawed and solemn-eyed. Then in the quiet July night, with the stars shining in the pale sky, the child was born. He gave a few cries and went to sleep. I rubbed his little body with oil, wrapped him in his white blanket, and tucked him warmly in his little bed. Then I made Marian comfortable, and we laughed and cried for the happiness

that had become ours. The robins that nestled in the forest around our home began to sing their joy in the new day that was coming; the sky grew paler; the birds sang louder; and Marian fell asleep.

I placed the baby's nest close to the bed, so that Marian could take care of him if he should wake, and then I left the cabin stealthily, for the dear ones needed rest. I ran down to the trail to the fiord. It was perfectly calm now.

I towed my big boat around and moored it in its place, then ran swiftly back up the trail to the cabin. Marian was awake, and I told her that I had better run over to McRae's to see if Mrs. McRae was still at their ranch, for she could show us how to take care of the child, as neither Marian nor I had had that experience before. I kissed her and sat by her side for a while, and she went to sleep again, a peaceful smile on her lips. Then I left the cabin quietly. I was filled with a wonderful, solemn delight as I ran over the trail.

The McRae ranch was deserted, so I sped on over the new road to Brother Page's ranch, where the Lindholms were living for the summer. They were home, and I told them my story. Mrs. Lindholm came with me, and Charley went to town for me to send a telegram of the happy news to our family, with a letter to the doctor at Haines, telling him exactly what had happened, and asking him to come out if anything remained to be done.

Marian was still asleep when we arrived, and the dear little pink thing that was our son was sleeping too, and we did not disturb him till later in the day when he woke up and cried for food. The kind woman who had come to help us showed us how to bathe the little

fellow, and how to fasten the clothes on him, and then I lay down and slept long and deeply. When I woke Mrs. Lindholm had a big supper waiting for me, which filled me with new strength and sent me back to our little old cabin to sleep again. A few days passed and Mrs. Lindholm left us, for she, too, had children who needed her. Marian was getting strong rapidly, and young Edmund had found appetite and voice. We had decided that Marian should at least rest in bed ten days, and I was now the cook, nurse, fisherman, and farmer. I was up and down all day long, bringing a load of hay each time till half the room upstairs was crammed full, and all the near-by beaches were cut clean of hay.

THE SENTIMENTAL SALMON PIRATES

CHAPTER VII

THE SENTIMENTAL SALMON PIRATES

THEN one afternoon when I went out to clean my nets I got fifty-eight sockeyes. They filled up my skiff, so I took them to my big boat and unloaded. I then ran up the trail and told Marian that there was a salmon run on, and that she must not worry if I did not come up for some time. A strong south wind had sprung up, and when that happens after a spell of calm in July, the salmon usually begin to run strong. I went out to my nets, and found that again they were heavy with fish. Load after load I took to the big boat, till it lay deep in the water, and then at about ten o'clock in the evening the fish ceased striking the nets. I had made a couple of hundred dollars that afternoon, and though I was weary from bending over so much, and my hands were sore and torn from the teeth of the fish and the sharp cutting strands of the net, I was happy. This was the boy's catch. It was the sea's offering to him. It would put us on our feet financially. Now I could look the world in the face again.

It was getting quite dark, for the sky was covered with low-hanging clouds that were rushing up from the south. As I neared our beach, a gas-boat came around Viking's Point and sped swiftly into the cove. It was a low, gray-painted craft with a speedy engine and a muffler over its exhaust. I could hardly see it against the rocks, it was so well protected by its colour.

Immediately I thought, "Pirates!" The waters of South-Eastern Alaska were full of them this year, these fish pirates who robbed traps, and nets, and set-lines, and stole anything and everything they could lay their hands on. I sat still in my little boat, wondering what they were going to do. They made a circle in the cove close around my fish-boat, that was loaded deep with my catch. There were two of them, and they craned their necks over my boat as they passed it, turned round, and, seeing me, went back into the cove and cast anchor. I rowed over and unloaded the thirty odd salmon from the last running of the nets, and then went to where they were anchored and now sat on the deckhouse of their boat watching me.

They were a swarthy, tough pair, reckless-looking and unshaven. I don't remember what I said to them, but we chatted along pleasantly enough. They were Mexicans. I talked with them for a long time, then hurried up to the cabin, told Marian of my catch and of the pirates, for they had practically told me that that was what they were, had a bite to eat, and taking my rifle, hurried back down to the beach. I stuck the gun through the railing of my skiff, and rowed past their boat out to my nets. I could see them watching me through the porthole of their cabin. I was certain that they would rob me if they dared, and my determination to keep my catch was desperate. I took fifteen more salmon, and then rowed back to the cove again. The Mexicans were watching my every move.

I ran up to the cabin to see if Marian was all right, and found her asleep; so I hurried back down to the beach, and lay in the edge of the woods watching the

pirates. Once, a little after midnight, they pulled up their anchor and started their engine. I ran down and got into my skiff. They saw me, and went out of the bay, made a circle and came back in, as if they had found it too rough to go on. They anchored again, while I ran to the nearest net. There were no fish. Then I rowed back into the cove and ran up the trail. Marian was awake, and I told her that I would have to watch. She begged me not to get into trouble; and I promised that I would do nothing but defend my catch if the pirates should attempt to take it. I spent the rest of the night watching, showing myself once in a while, to let them know that I was on deck.

Morning found me tired out. The cannery boat that was to take the fish was not due till the next morning. That meant that I would have to watch all day and another night, when already I was worn out with fatigue and anxiety. It was too much. I rowed out to the pirates and talked with them some more, told them that my wife was in bed, and that we had a little baby. I asked them to go up with me and see it. They hesitated, thinking that I was trying to lead them into some trap, which indeed I was, the trap of their own consciences; but I was so very insistent, that they came, but not before they had taken their rifles from the walls of the cabin, one of them looking boldly at me, saying that perhaps they would see a bird on the way. Thus, all armed to the teeth, we rowed ashore and went up the trail to the house.

They were surprised, and very awkward, when they saw what I had there: my beautiful girl on the bed,

and the pink little babe at her breast. They were very uneasy, and would have left right away; but I set to work and made breakfast, insisting that they should stay and eat, telling them that it was our custom to break bread with all men who came to our house, that they might leave as friends. So they stayed.

Marian let each of them hold the baby for a little while, and they were awed by the wonderful clean little child, and by the loveliness of Marian. Their faces lit up with kindliness. One of them took a dollar from his pocket and put it on the table. "I give forrr baby," he said. The other one smiled, and I knew that I need not worry about the salmon any longer. We ate and they left us, wishing us well, and I slept, for I was tired out.

The cannery boat came the next morning, and I pitched eight hundred and sixty-two sockeyes and twenty-two dog salmon over the rail, turning over the largest single catch of the season.

It was the last catch, too. The salmon had all come in a bunch, and after that there were only a few sockeyes dribbling in now and then among the dog salmon, which were plentiful that year. I kept my nets in the water three weeks longer, but then when I could only get from three to ten good fish a day it was hardly worth while to bother, so I turned in my gear, and went to the cannery to get my check.

I BECOME WATCHMAN AT A CANNERY

CHAPTER VIII

I BECOME WATCHMAN AT A CANNERY

Mr. Birdnett was in the best of spirits, for his cannery was putting up a record catch, and the price of canned salmon had doubled on account of the War. He asked what I meant to do during the coming winter, and I replied that I had no plans yet, but that I would try to work at something to meet expenses.

"I need a watchman this winter," he said then. "Do you want it? A hundred dollars a month, and groceries at cost from the store."

This was a rare opportunity. I jumped at it. It was better than anything else I could do.

"I'll see Mack about it," Birdnett said, and went out.

Mack was their regular watchman. He had been there for several years, as night-watchman in the summer and watchman in the winter. I had heard that he was a very difficult man to get along with, but I was not going to let that scare me out of a job.

The superintendent came back into the store where I was waiting, and said that it was all right, so I had a job for the winter. One of the cannery hands came up to me before I left for Haines, and gave me a bit of information.

"Mack's an I.W.W., an Anarchist, a pro-German, and a Sinn Fein Irishman, and no one can get along

with him. I thought I'd tell you, because I heard you was going to be watchman with him," he apologized.

I laughed. "Some combination!" I said. "Well, we'll have something to talk about, anyway, if he's all those interesting things."

My well-meaning friend left me, shaking his head dubiously.

I brought the news to Viking's Cove, and there was joy in the family. We were out of debt now, and I would get five months in at a hundred dollars each. It would not cost us so much to live with groceries at cost from the cannery store. Besides this, we ought to have at least forty sacks of potatoes to sell, and a hundred sacks of rutabagas.

We were on the up-grade now financially, and it lifted a tremendous burden from us. I had time to take care of the potato-field, and I kept the plants free from weeds and nicely hilled up. It was a delight to us to look at the blossoming vines in long even rows where before there had been a dense, almost impenetrable thicket. It was our work, and it was good to us. And the little one was a constant joy. I packed him on my back whenever we went anywhere together. He was a happy baby, only crying when he was hungry, lying most of the time, pink and sleeping. We took him wherever we went, and we went together more often than before, for the work was no longer so urgent upon us, and we did not feel uneasy when we took a day off. We were out of debt, and the immediate future looked safe and reassuring.

On calm days we often rowed out in the skiff, or paddled like Indians, one in each end with the little one in the middle sleeping in his bundle of blankets.

On such days we took a lunch along, often landing on some strange beach where neither of us had been before. We would build a bonfire of driftwood, or go exploring along the cliffs, and in the caves that the sea had washed out of the rock. There were many interesting things among the driftwood in the curving pebbled coves: logs and lumber, boxes, parts of old shipwrecked boats, and canoes, broken oars, strangely shaped bottles, and many other things. Sometimes when the baby was asleep in the secure nest we made for him near the fire, Marian and I would steal away, and walking hand in hand along the beach, tell stories about everything we saw, where they came from, and the many things that had happened to them before they finally drifted up on this beach along the fiord. Or, again, I would take a gun along and kill a duck or two, which we would roast on spits over the fire, telling stories or reading aloud while the baby lay open-eyed in his nest, smiling vaguely at us when we bent over him. This was the kind of life that I had dreamed of when I was a bachelor, and it was the kind of life that was worth living.

Then the rains came. The leaves turned amber, golden, and brown again, and the early frosts withered the potato vines. It was time to work, and I pitched in with new joy and ambition. All the doubt and discouragement of the past spring had fallen from me. I was out of debt and going ahead. What did it matter to me that potatoes were selling at two dollars a hundred in Haines, and that there was no market for them at that, as all the farmers thereabouts had raised potatoes that year? What did it matter to us that though potatoes were four dollars a sack in

Juneau, there was no market for them there either? We could get by without selling our potatoes. We could keep them till the spring, and then if we could not sell them we could perhaps afford to give them away. I dug a pit in the middle of the field, put in a drain, and built a roof over it with two feet of dirt on top. There I stored them away in nice dry bins. Then I pulled fifty sacks of rutabagas, sold some at the cannery, and traded twenty-five of them to McRae for some lumber he had, that I needed.

Some of the turnips and other roots I stored in the pit, and others I packed up over the trail to the cabin where I had built a root-house connecting with the old cabin. It was only a small affair, made with double walls of logs and filled in between with dirt. Here, too, we stored all the canned fish and berries, preserves, jellies, and jams that we would not need at the cannery, and by the 1st of October we were ready to move, and it only remained for the cannery to be through for the season and send a boat for us, as the superintendent had said he would.

It was a very rainy fall, and while we waited I spent most of my time in the house. We nailed a ceiling on to the rafters upstairs, and papered it with old magazines and newspapers that we had gathered for the purpose, and it made quite an interesting pattern. On the morning of the nineteenth the *Chilkoot* whistled shrilly in the cove, and I immediately began packing the blanket-roll. Everything else had been packed down and stored in the little cabin on the beach. We said good-bye to our home, took one last look at the lake that we loved so dearly, and then we set out.

At the cannery we found everything astir. The boat that was to take the crew south was due that afternoon. Suitcases, trunks, blanket-rolls, and great bundles were lying around helter-skelter on the wharf. Men were standing around in groups, and the store was crowded with Indians and white cannery hands; for they had been paid off that morning, and there were a score of persons who seemed not to understand their accounts, and were excitedly jabbering about them, or recklessly buying this and that with their newly acquired summer's wages. The book-keeper, who was a fat, imposing figure, was kept busy between the ones that wanted to buy and the ones who had not received money enough. The first he waited on with alacrity, the latter he tried to avoid or he showed them the books, and they went away as wise as before.

In "China-house," where the Orientals lived, great games were going on. Gambling had been carried on there all season long, but now it had reached its peak of intensity. This was their last chance to win more, or to regain the losses of other days and nights. I went there to see it all, and was stricken with sympathy for a young Chinaman with a child's face who was sitting on a box in the corner of the large room, his head in his hands, staring with unseeing eyes ahead of him. He had lost his summer's wages the night before, I was told. The rest of them were crowding around several tables, pushing and reaching with handfuls of money, placing stakes and picking up winnings, all amidst the jerky, singsong chatter of Chinamen, Japanese, and Filipinos. There were white men too, and Mexicans, and I saw

the superintendent extract himself from one of the crowding groups. He saw me, and came over to where I stood.

"Well, I guess I'll quit," he said. "I'm sixty dollars to the good. I don't savvy that domino game, but I generally win. I'd better go and get ready now. I sat in a poker game all last night in the bunkhouse, and just broke even."

He sauntered out, and I thought that it was no wonder he had pouches under his eyes, sitting up playing poker all night, and then working and gambling all day. The air in "China-house" was stifling with all sorts of heavy odours, from that of dried fish to the incense sticks that were slowly smouldering before a sort of altar on one wall where on a shelf stood a small statue of Buddha; and a lot of golden and black characters were printed on the wall on a red background, and red streamers and pendants hanging around with black and golden Chinese writing on them. It was their "joss-house," one Filipino told me when he saw me looking at it curiously: "Chinaman God there," he said.

I went back to the store, and as most of the customers were gone to dinner and the large storekeeper had the time to attend to me, I made out the list of groceries I thought we would need over the winter. It was a long list, and made an imposing pile of foodstuffs when it was all piled near the door.

Then the boat came. Long before it reached the wharf, some of the men stood ready with their suitcases and bundles. They crowded on the end of the dock and in the warehouse. Chinamen, wearing American clothes and Chinese shoes with thick white

soles, were tripping round, laughing and chattering in their jerky, singsong way. Stolid Indians stood looking on. They were not going south. Young squaws walked around arm-in-arm, staring stonily ahead when the Orientals made funny remarks about or to them, then running giggling off the dock when they were far enough away from the mob to suit their sense of propriety. Indian families were leaving the cannery too, in gas-boats or long war canoes. They were silent and business-like about it, packing their belongings down over the rocky beach, pushing the canoes off, paddling out into the wind, and then setting their bulgy sails. Very different they were from the men who had come from the south and were going back there; for the south is nervous and noisy, while the north is stoic and silent.

It was a long time before the crew was allowed to go on board. Marian and I, with the baby, stood on a deserted part of the dock watching them. First the book-keeper went on board to make out tickets for them all. This took so long that the milling crowd on the dock put down their suitcases and bundles. Some remembered things they had forgotten, rushed frantically to the bunkhouse to look for them, rushed back out again, and then once more stood and waited. It was agonizing! Even I began to fidget and worry. The men were so restless, so eager to be off! This was what they had worked for all these six months, and now the waiting seemed longer than the whole toiling season.

Finally the book-keeper appeared on deck. There was much shaking hands with Mack, who was with the crowd, and some of the men who knew me came

over to Marian and me, and said good-bye. The last on board was Mr. Birdnett. Then the whistle blew, the ropes were pulled in, and amidst a lot of waving of hands and shouting, the steamboat majestically backed out, turned around, and steamed off, leaving Mack and us alone in the north with the Indians. They felt sorry for us, the ones who were leaving. They had never spent a winter in Alaska, and to them the thought was full of terror. The wife of one of the men had told Marian that she considered it very remarkable that young people like us should stay in such a desolate place a whole long winter. From their point of view it was desolate, for the cannery lay in a small cove facing north, cut off from the sun altogether from some time in October till some time in February. But what was a winter without sunshine to Marian and me? We had each other and the baby, and with this time of gloomy weather we planned to buy next summer's sunshine to be enjoyed with free consciences. By spring, when it was time to go back to our ranch, we would be able to pay cash for our groceries and buy a cow besides. Then we would have milk for the baby, and butter, cream, and cheese for the family. This winter, too, I hoped, as I was to be a watchman, to be able to do some writing, for I could write now without worrying about material necessities. I would have an opportunity to work toward my ultimate goal, becoming a writer.

Mack laughed at me when I told him of my ambition. "'Twas many a better man than you that tried and failed," he said, "and there won't be much time to write here. We have a lot of wurrk to do. We wurrk eight hours a day here."

I knew that there was work to do, for Birdnett had told me that, saying that Mack knew what was to be done, but I had no idea that I would be required to work eight hours a day every day throughout the winter. "Do you mean that we have to work eight hours a day all winter long?" I asked incredulously.

"Sure," Mack said disgustedly. "We have more wurrk than we can do."

While most of his speech was perfectly American, there were some words he spoke with an Irish brogue, as if he had given those words up as hopeless to reform. He was not as large a man as I, and I rather think he regretted that, and found cause to make sure that he was boss, for he added after telling about the work: "And you might as well know now as any other time that you are here to wurrk, and to do as I tell you."

"That's all right," I hastened to say, for he looked rather ruffled, and I wanted to reassure him. "Birdnett told me there was work to do, and that you knew what it was."

"I don't care what Birdnett said." Mack spoke with deadly pointedness, looking off somewhere with pale brown eyes, as if afraid to look me in the face for fear of losing his determination to put me in my place. "I don't give a damn what he said!"—with more vehemence the second time. "Make no mistake about it: I'm the boss here." He sauntered off to his shack, leaving me rather shocked by his abruptness. I went to the little gray bungalow where Marian, the baby, and I were to live that winter, and I told Marian word for word what had been said. We talked the matter over, and decided that apparently

it was no wonder that other men said Mack was hard to get along with, but that the only sensible course of action for us to follow was to be as accommodating as possible, to do what Mack desired as willingly as we could, so that he should feel absolutely safe in his position as boss, and not find it necessary to insist upon his authority.

I hurried to help Marian with the straightening up of the bungalow, and was ready to work the next morning. Mack came early for his breakfast. He was at the door at seven, and it was lucky for me that I had been up for an hour and had the oatmeal on cooking. Marian had not yet arisen, so I set the table, fried a few slices of bacon, brought bread and fruit and the hot mush. I felt worried for fear it was not enough breakfast, but Mack only ate plentifully of the oatmeal, and I was greatly relieved. It was hard to think of anything to say. He was so unapproachable, like a man of stone, sitting there across from me with a belligerent air about him. The silence was oppressive, and finally in desperation I blurted out: "What are we going to do to-day, Mack?"

He gave me a quick look, and set his lips grimly. "You'll find out soon enough," he said.

I started to tell him that he might as well cut out the hostility, that I had not come there to fight with him, but I was so disgusted at the air of superiority that he assumed, that I was afraid I might get sarcastic too if I spoke. So I said nothing, and after eating hurriedly Mack went out without saying a word. Marian came in as soon as he had gone, and we talked the matter over again. Evidently Mack was hostile to me for some reason or other, or else he felt that I was

a menace to his authority, and was bent on cowing me from the very beginning. I felt that I had not the temperament to cope with such a man, and that if he was to be melted, and made a friend of, Marian must start the work.

Sharply at eight I left the bungalow, and saw Mack coming from his shack. Evidently he was on his way to call me, for he turned and went back when he saw me coming. We went into the kitchen, where he set me to work washing the dishes that had been left by the cannery cook. In fact, every dish and plate, and every item of mess-gear was in need of a thorough washing. The cook had evidently let things slide the last day or so preparatory to leaving. I built a fire in the big range and put water on to heat, then gathered up all the dishes. There must have been enough to serve over fifty persons, for they made an enormous heap. Then I began washing them in a big pan that fitted into the sink, stacking them on the drainboard. Mack came in to wipe them. He scrutinized each one carefully, and if there was a speck of dirt on one after the hot rinsing water had been poured on, he threw it violently back into the pan with a stony look on his face. I decided that this was one of the most remarkable things about this Irishman. His face never changed. His brown eyes were rather nice, but they were ever looking off into space, and his mouth was always set in the same grim, determined fashion. Determined to what? I wondered. Determined to be hostile and rude, I thought, as he fired another plate back. Time would show. I was to work every day for six months with this man. He would loosen up some time during that period. I

would make him. I felt sure that in time I could melt this hostile iceman. Still, I had to admit that he was getting on my nerves. He was so emphatically silent, and so absolutely unapproachable.

We worked at the dishes all forenoon, and during that time we were within a few feet of each other, and only twice did we speak. The first time I said by way of opening a conversation: "It must be pretty lonely for you here in the winter, Mack."

He did not answer me. "At least, I would be lonely." Never a cheep.

We worked in silence for a while, and he pitched several plates back into the pan with a little more violence than before, I thought. I felt a little amused. A little while later I decided to ask a direct question, so I asked the one which in this northland always sets the tongue to wagging. "Where do you hail from in Ireland?" I asked.

He gave me another fleeting glance, and staring at the wall, said: "That's none of your business."

"Gosh! Don't you think you're impolite?" I asked on the impulse of the moment, but he was not to be jarred in the least.

"I don't think when I'm wurrking," he replied.

So that was it. He did not favour my talking while I was working. I wondered if he would let me sing. I began to hum a tune. He said nothing. I sang louder. Still he was unmoved, and then I sang as loud as I cared to, and kept it up the rest of the morning. That was better than the oppressive silence impregnated with hostility.

At the noon hour I told Marian all about it, before Mack came. She would try to get him to talk. We

had heard that he was violently pro-German, and we thought perhaps we could get him to talk about the War as an opening wedge in our acquaintanceship. We decided that Mack should be sociable and pleasant, whether he wanted to or not; it was a sort of game we were playing, only he didn't know it. Soon he came strolling in, after knocking, and sitting down by the table at his allotted place, looked fixedly at the water-pitcher with his mouth very firm. Suddenly I felt sorry for him then, for he must have been exceedingly uncomfortable and lonesome. I thought he looked rather slight, and sad, in his determination to keep me in subjection. Marian must have had this same thought, for she put our young son, whom she had been holding, down in a rocking-chair near Mack, and said: "Do you like babies?"

Mack looked up and smiled a little. He was kind-looking when he smiled. While Marian set the meal on the table, he occupied himself jiggling the chair slightly, and making clicking noises to the round-eyed little fellow, who stared fascinatedly at him. We did not talk much during the meal, but the silence was comfortable. Marian, woman-like, asked if the inlet froze over in the winter, something which she should have known did not happen; but Mack did not seem to mind explaining that the only ice on the inlet was the floes that sometimes drifted down from the upper end. These often piled up on the beach, he said, in an icy wall; and before we were through eating he was yarning away in true Alaskan fashion of icefloes piled twenty feet high on the beach.

When the time to work came, he got up in a hurry and went out; and when on the job I attempted to open

the discourse again, he did not answer me, but seemed to grow more and more hostile, as if he resented having talked to us at dinner. He became more and more particular about the work. First I had to clean the range, taking the soot from around it. I did not do this to suit him, and he snatched the long scraper from my hand quite rudely, and did the work himself while I watched him. Then he told me to scrape the dried dough from the corners of the table, and I set to work rather sulkily, for I must confess that I was considerably exasperated. I sang a bit, for I was angry at myself for letting him get on my nerves, and that helped some. A man can't sing and be angry at the same time. But Mack was in an ill-humour, I think, for after watching me for a while, he pushed me to one side, jerked the knife out of my hand, and began scraping like mad at the table.

This was too much. I took him by the shoulder and turned him round. "Look here, Mack," I said sternly. "This won't do. I'm not a kid or a fool to be pushed around like that. I am willing to do the work you tell me to do, for I need this job, and I am going to keep it if I possibly can. But let me tell you one thing: if you don't treat me decently there is likely to be trouble. I don't mean to threaten you, Mack, but I have a devil of a temper, that sometimes runs away with my better judgment; and if you keep up the kind of conduct that you have started this afternoon, there is no telling when I'll fly off the handle and land on you with a wollop in the jaw." I was beginning to get a bit warmed up. "I've been a bad man, Mack, and though I honestly don't want trouble, I can't stand to be abused."

Mack smiled a bit bitterly as he looked out of the window while I spoke. When I was through he gave me one quick look, and then, looking away, said very quietly: "If you ever strike me you'll make a very serious mistake. Don't forget that I'm in charge of this cannery, and that you are here to do as I tell you. I can fire you any time I want to. Do you understand that?" He looked at me significantly, but I felt that it was not that he had meant at the beginning of his reply to my outburst. He had meant that if I ever laid hands on him he would shoot me. I didn't doubt that he would, and it was all such danged foolishness, the whole thing.

"Mack," I said. "Damnation! I expect to work here with you all winter. This is our first day together, and we are quarrelling. I didn't come here to scrap with you, but to work as watchman for the winter. Let's forget this damned foolishness. I'm willing to do anything you tell me. Why get hostile towards me? Cut it out!"

He looked out of the window imperturbably, unmoved by my feeling in the matter. "Don't forget," he said in his slow, rigid way, "that I'm the boss here. I know what to do."

I took up the knife that he had dropped on the table, and began scraping away with futile anger at the hard dough. "Sure you're the boss," I said over my shoulder. "That suits me. Don't think for a minute that I want to be." I scraped away with the knife. I had failed in what I had tried to do, but I had learned that the best thing to do was to work like the devil and say nothing. On the job he would be the master, and see to it that I was the slave. But I

was getting a hundred dollars a month for it, and next summer we could buy a cow, so why should I care? I would be happy, anyway. I burst out into another song, and by evening the kitchen was all spick and span, ready for the next crew in the spring.

THE MANTRAP

CHAPTER IX

THE MANTRAP

One day after we had worked inside the cannery, sweeping up, and made everything ready for the next year, Mack informed me that he was going to put wires to all the doors and windows, and place guns around, so that anyone breaking into the cannery would get shot. He told me this in a matter-of-fact voice, as if killing a man was nothing to worry about.

I was aghast at the idea. What if someone really should try to break into the cannery, and get shot?

"I'm not in favour of it," I said emphatically. It was the first time for several weeks that I had said anything that could in any way be construed as a breach of discipline.

He looked surprisedly at me. "You have nothing to do with it. I am just warning you, that's all."

"But, good God, man! What if you should kill someone?"

"I guess I can dispose of him," Mack said haughtily. "The cannery was broken into last year, and a lot of nets and gear stolen. I'm sure the same fellows are coming back this winter, and it's my business to get them."

"But, Mack," I protested, "you wouldn't kill a man just because he was stealing, would you? He might be up against it some way. A man doesn't steal just for fun. I was so hungry that I stole once, Mack,

and I don't think that I deserved to be killed for it. I'm not a bit in favour of setting these guns. I think it's a sin to run the risk of killing a man like that."

"You have nothing to do with it," Mack asserted again. "The Indians who did this stealing last year took the stuff out into the bay and sunk it. They're just trying to get me out of a job. All you've got to do, Svend, is to do what I tell you."

"But dammit, Mack! I might want to go into the cannery in a hurry some time. I don't want to get shot."

"You've no business in the cannery. I've the keys in my pocket, and you can't get in unless you break in." He said this with a significant glance, and I had the depressing feeling that he was setting the trap for me as well as for anyone else.

"When it comes to killing a thief, sure, I'd just as soon kill fellows like those who broke in last winter, and threw that stuff in the bay just to get me fired. They're coming back this year all right, and I'll get them." He was terrible in his immovability. He insulted me as calmly as he talked of killing when I insisted he had no right to set a gun. We were carrying sacks of shavings out of the carpenter's shop, which was in the loft of the cannery, throwing them down on the main floor to be used later on for kindling, so we were walking back and forth through the long building. I decided to try once more. I stopped him once when we were passing.

"Mack," I said sternly, "you must know that I won't stand for any setting of traps in this cannery. I was hired by Mr. Birdnett as a watchman, and it is my duty to protest. Do you understand me?"

He looked calmly out of one of the windows for a little while. "I've a good notion to fire you for this," he said. "If it wasn't for your wife and your little baby, I would fire you."

That was all the good it did to protest. Nothing could shake him. I wondered if physical violence would help, and I longed madly to grab him, and shake him back and forth until his composure was all gone. When dinner-time came I told Marian about it, but though she spoke to him too, he was not to be changed in his determination. A couple of days later I tackled him again, threatening to report the whole business to the Marshal at Haines. He retreated then, saying that he would set one gun so that it would not injure anyone, but only make an alarm if the cannery were broken into. That seemed a fair compromise, so we dropped the matter, and said no more about it.

But our troubles were far from over. After the gun argument, Mack became more abusive when we were on the job. One day when we were working in one of the bunkhouses, making some new bunks, he snatched the hammer out of my hand and began viciously to break up my work. I lost my temper completely. Shaking my fist in his face, I told him that if he ever snatched a tool out of my hand like that again I would give him a licking, write a letter to Mr. Birdnett, and have him fired. I quit working then, went to the house, told Marian my troubles, and stayed there till noon. Mack came, and we had a conference. Marian talked for me, explaining carefully to him that the way in which we lived was ridiculous. He was treated as a friend in our house,

and then he acted like a tyrant about the work. She emphasized that I was there in the cannery as a partner, a watchman for Mr. Birdnett, who had hired me and who paid me, not as a slave working for Mack.

For the first time I saw Mack startled out of his composure. He was sorry that there was this misunderstanding, and he agreed that it was highly foolish for two men spending the winter all alone to be anything but thoroughly friendly. He looked so frightened at the prospects of losing the companionship he had had with us at the meal hours, that both of us were struck with the pathos of his position; and for the first time I had a feeling of warm liking for the man spring up in me. He did try to be different after that; and if he did not discuss his plans, he at least told some of them to me, I on my part striving to refrain from any suggestion.

All these weeks I had been writing, mornings and nights, not on the Norse mythology story, but telling my own adventures in Alaska. I got out my old diary, and rewrote the story, as it was, in a less crude fashion. I did not have to deviate from the truth, for that story as I had lived it was exciting enough. It grew by leaps and bounds. Every morning Marian read the two to three hundred words that I had written during the evening and in the morning. She was tremendously enthusiastic about it, and though we knew the story was crudely written, we were certain that when we had a little more time we could polish it up so that other people would like to read it too. Had I not been so busy thinking about the book, I should have worried more about Mack and all his

doings. But the book was the chief topic of conversation. Whenever I had written something especially good, we were certain it would be successful; but when some mornings I had written nothing at all that was inspiring, we were in doubt about it. It seemed almost hopeless at times. Still, I enjoyed the writing, and we were happy in knowing that at last I was having a chance of trying my hand at it.

Even Mack would come in sometimes and ask how the "Author" was coming along. He had an idea that I was a bit crazy to think I could write a book, for he often sneered amusedly when I told him of my ideas for plots of books. At least, I thought he sneered, but he may have only tried to be kind and smile in spite of his unbelief. After our talk Mack modified his behaviour enough to make it bearable, though he was still in the main silent and aloof. He was never failing in the courtesy and propriety of his conduct toward Marian and the baby. When I was gone to town for the mail, he waited until a little late to come to dinner, and after he had come, he invariably ate his meals quickly and hurried away. He was always kind to the baby, always, when he came to the house, stopping to talk to him for a moment or inquire after his health. I felt that this must be the real Mack, and that the Mack I worked with eight hours every day was the product of his love of authority, and his ambition to be boss. I had a sneaking idea that he expected to be made foreman of the cannery some day, and that this ambition was what made him find so much work to do, and practise his authority on me. Still, I hoped to make him as friendly while we were working as while we were in the house, but I never

succeeded. One day, however, I determined to talk to him, so I started in and told him all the stories I wanted to write. We were carrying a great pile of planks off the dock, one by one, and as he usually walked in front, I could not see whether or not he listened; but once or twice when we were picking up a plank and he was facing me, I thought I saw him look pityingly at me, as if he thought I were crazy and was sorry for me.

Just before Christmas I wanted to make a bed for our little son. One Sunday I asked my boss for the keys to the carpenter's shop. He gave them to me, telling me not to go down into the dark end of the net-loft, as he had a gun set down there. I had no business in that end, and it was almost pitch-dark, so I stayed away. Had I investigated, I might have found that the gun was set to kill anyone who opened the door from the cannery, and I might have avoided the catastrophe, but I did not. Mack had told me that the gun was set for an alarm only. I imagined that the gun was pointed up, and felt no desire to go prowling around in the dark with a gun set to go off at the touch of a wire. Nor did I care to invite a return of my strained relations with Mack by taking a lantern and openly investigating his work. These considerations seem almost criminally petty now, but I did not know then what I know now.

I made the bed and departed, giving Mack back his keys, all my thoughts being for Marian's pleasure when she saw what a fine bed I had made for our son.

Christmas came, and Edmund had his first Christmas-tree. Mack stayed with us only a few minutes

after supper, when I had lit all the candles on the tree, so we three had our celebration alone. The baby sat wide-eyed in his bed looking at the many lights, while Marian and I sang Christmas songs, and ate cookies and candy; and when the north lights began to shoot over the heavens in long fanlike bars that fluttered, shimmered, went out, and blazed forth again, we sat by the window watching them, and talked of her home in the southland.

Time passed swiftly after Christmas and New Year. It seemed to be hurrying to bring the stroke that would fill our little community of four whites and a dozen Indians with death, sorrow, and worry. A big snow came in the first week of January, and we were kept busy shovelling snow off the walks and the wharf. One morning—it was the morning of the 9th—I asked Mack for the key to the front warehouse of the cannery, for the snow-plough that we used on the wharf was locked up there. He gave me the key, and I went out on the dock and began pushing off the snow. It was a beautiful clear morning with a slight north breeze, quite cold where we were, in the shade of Mount Rippinsky, but with bright sunshine bathing the mountains on the other side of the inlet with yellow-pink light. Three Indians came down from the village, and boarded a gas-boat that lay moored under the dock. They were going to Dyeasanki to hunt seals, they told me, when I asked them. The boat started, but soon they came back in again and tied up. "Lost rudder," one of them said when I asked them the trouble, and they all three went down to the back of the cannery. I worked on, thinking how simple was their existence with just a living gained outdoors, and

wondering why it was that they did not survive. Then I heard a shot in the cannery. There came a series of loud yells, and I thought for a moment that Mack had shot a wild dog that had been hanging around. Then I saw the Indians coming on the run from the village, and dropping the snow-plough, I ran to the back-door of the cannery building. Mack was holding the door open, and three Indians were carrying Theodore Johns out through it. He was moaning terribly. "What's the matter?" I yelled.

"Somebody is shooting us up there," a half-breed told me; and then I ran to the house for bandages and disinfectants. Marian wanted to come to help, for she was afraid of dirt getting into the wound; but I ran on ahead of her, and when I found that it was an abdominal wound, I would not let her come. It was bad enough that she should know about the dreadful business without her actually seeing and being in touch with it all.

I took a clean sheet and ran to the village. The house was crowded with excited Indians, lamenting squaws, and crying children. Theodore lay on his bed moaning in agony. I cut open his shirt, and then I saw the fruitlessness of anything that we could do. The bullet had struck in one side of the abdomen, and a great pile of intestines had bulged through the hole.

I told the Indians to get a boat ready to go to town, for we must get him to the Fort Seward Hospital as soon as possible. Since Mack was not around, I took charge of affairs, sending one Indian for some mattresses from the bunkhouse, and another for the stretchers that stood inside the cannery door. When

they came back, we carried Theodore down the beach to the waiting boat, and made for Fort Seward as fast as the slow little boat could go. When we reached Fort Seward, I rushed to the quartermaster's barn for an ambulance to take the wounded man to the hospital. Then the Indians wanted to know what to do, and I told them to report the matter to the Federal Marshal.

I stayed in the hospital to see how badly the man was hurt, and later was told not to leave till I had seen the Commanding Officer.

Indians came flocking from Haines, wanting to see Theodore, but the doctor would not permit it. They came and went all afternoon in an ever-moving procession, for Theodore was of a powerful family and had a host of relatives. His wife was the only one who was let in, and she remained silent and stoic in the vestibule all afternoon. In the early evening Theodore died on the operating-table. The Commanding Officer came down from headquarters with his stenographer and several witnesses. I was put under oath and cross-examined about the matter. They seemed to think at first that I had killed the Indian, but when they found that I was telling the truth, by asking the Indian woman some questions, they let me go down-town after I had given them my statement. When I reached town the Marshal had already been at the cannery, and had arrested Mack, who was in the Haines Jail. After getting permission from the Marshal, and promising not to talk about the murder, I went to see Mack, to find out what he wanted me to do. He was as calm as ever. He would telegraph to Birdnett, and I should go back to the cannery,

taking somebody with me, for the insurance regulations made it necessary that two watchmen should be kept by the cannery. My wife had the keys. That was all.

The Marshal told me to come back the next day to the hearing in the Commissioner's court, and after getting one of the McRae boys to come with me, we ran over the trail to the cannery.

There is an age-old custom among the Indians up here of taking a life for a life, and it was only a few years before that an absolutely innocent couple were murdered in their beds for the killing of two Indians miles away. We were both worried for Marian's sake, and ran as fast as we could.

We found her all right. There were only a few Indians in the village, as most of them had gone to town. I made the rounds of the cannery to see if all the doors were locked, put some big chunks of wood in Mack's stove, for he had a lot of potatoes and canned goods in his shack, and then I hurried back to our little house.

Marian had been worrying too, for that afternoon a bunch of squaws and an old blind Indian had come to interview her about the shooting. Not knowing half of what they said, as only one of them spoke English, she had been afraid they meant harm to her and the baby; and she was greatly disturbed, though outwardly calm, as she had watched for my return.

We did not sleep much that night, for the north wind blew around the corners of the cannery, making weird noises, creaking the doors, and rattling the windows; and it soughed mournfully in the heavy timber on the mountain above us, and we could not

forget for a moment the moaning of the stricken Indian, terrible in its deadly agony. But, thank God, the baby was not touched by any of the sorrow that had come. He slept sweetly and peacefully, for he had been greatly amused by the coming and going of the Indians. Morning came at last, finding us weary from the worry and lack of sleep. I was responsible now, and I made the rounds of the plant with the utmost care.

After breakfast I had to go to town to be at the hearing, so I had to be parted from Marian and the baby again, for I could not take them along. There was too much wind to go by boat, and the trail was difficult with a high hill to cross and deep snow to wade through. I stayed with them as long as I could, then kissed them good-bye and ran.

The trial was already under way when I arrived, and the court-room was so crowded that I could hardly get through.

The Commissioner reproved me for not being on time, and then I was put on the stand to testify. I told what I knew about the guntrap, giving to the best of my recollection the conversations or arguments I had had with Mack, word for word. I had told about it over at the hospital when the Commanding Officer had examined me; but now when I had thought the matter over all night, it was natural that I remembered more detail about the matter.

The Commissioner, a very lean man with a sharp nose and bird-like blue eyes, seemed to be antagonistic towards me. He kept up the angry attitude that had begun by his calling me down for not being on time, all the while he examined me. When I was through,

he pored over the typewritten paper that was my statement given at the hospital.

"It's mighty queer"—he addressed me with a hostile glare, and I thought there came a flicker of a smile on Mack's face—"it's mighty queer how your story to-day is so much different from what it was yesterday. I've asked you the same questions as the officer over at the post asked you, and in no one instance have you given exactly the same answer. Do you think you can get away with that?" He looked at me with profound contempt.

"I'd like to ask the witness a few questions, your honour," said an old man. He was the lawyer hired by Mack.

But the Commissioner would not let him. This was a hearing, not a trial, he said, so the lawyer sat down. Then Mack took the stand. He had not much to say.

On the morning of the 9th, he told, I had asked him for the keys to the cannery. He had given them to me, and I had gone in the front way, staying a long time. Finally he had gone around to see what I was doing, and I had come hurrying out from somewhere in the building, and he had wondered why I looked so agitated at his finding me there. Then he had gone to the store to wait on some Indians who wanted to buy groceries. Theodore Johns and two other Indians had come into the store, asking for a piece of iron to make a rudder, and he had given them the keys, telling them to look behind the retort. Then, a little while after, the shot had sounded, and he had gone out to see what was the matter, and had helped the Indians get the wounded man out. Quite a while after that I had come

unning from behind the cannery, very pale and ex-ited, and with a guilty look, and then I had gone to own and got the Marshal to come out and arrest im.

That was his story. At its close everybody was ooking at me. Some of the spectators were exchang-ng significant glances. Others looked incredulous, while others again smiled encouragingly at me. It was plain to see there and then who were my friends in own, and who were not; for the whole town was there, nd the ones who were not my friends took great de-ight in Mack's tale, and it showed in their faces. I lid not blame Mack for the suspicion he had thrown n me. I was sure he had not meant to kill Theodore. He had been accused of murder, and he was on trial or his life. He had never had much use for me, and am sure he had no great scruples about my welfare. t was his only way of saving himself as far as I could ee, and I did not blame him. But I did blame the nen who stood about taking delight in my discomfort, or, from the evidence that had gone before, there hould have been no doubt in their minds as to who ad placed the gun there. They were merely sensa-ion-seekers, glad to have trouble for anyone so long s they themselves were safe.

Then the lawyer took the stand. He pointed out hat there had been no real proof that his client had set he gun. He was not there to accuse anyone. He ad no evidence to back up an accusation; but it was lain to him that the whole thing had been hatched by omeone. The Indians had all told their little piece in he same words as if someone had coached them. There was a great doubt in his mind as to who had set

the gun, and the evidence was hardly sufficient to hold a man. He asked the court to release his client on grounds of insufficient evidence. He made no direct statement as to whose guilt it was, but he threw a host of hints that I was the man who should be tried instead of Mack.

The Commissioner said that the evidence was sufficient to hold the prisoner, and Mack was bound over for the grand jury.

I found that Mack had not sent a message to Birdnett, so I sent a telegram telling of the affair and saying that I was hiring another man. Then I went up to get Ivar Ericson, one of my Viking friends, for our neighbour boy had only come as an accommodation. Ivar rolled his blanket-roll immediately, said good-bye to his wife and little kid, and came with me to the cannery, establishing himself in Mack's house.

There followed weeks of cold weather, when we were never quite happy. There was always a cloud hanging above us. Mack was in jail plotting to get out at my expense. It was bad enough to know that Mack was locked up in that dark and desolate cage, and it was bad enough to know that we were liable to attack by the Indians to pay for the death of Theodore Johns. It took a lot of faith to be happy knowing that I was being plotted against, and that when Mack's trial came off in Juneau we would have to go there and play my life against his. It was only with difficulty that I finished the book that I was writing, though I had more time now. When Mack was gone I did not know what to do. He had spoken of painting the pile-driver, but it was too cold for that, so Ivar and I just kept the snow off the walks and the dock.

On a clear, still day in the latter part of January, a gas-boat came in from Haines, and landed a well-dressed man with two suitcases and a bedding-roll. He handed me a letter from Mr. Birdnett, telling me that he was Mr. Waite, and that he was to be watchman with me. He was young, and as he looked rather important I hoped he was a detective, for I wanted the mess cleared up, so that there would be no doubt in the minds of my fellow-citizens as to what my part in the affair had been.

But Jack Waite, though he looked the part, was not a detective. He had been working in the shipyards in Seattle, when a strike was called, so he had gone down to the cannery company's offices to see if he could get a job with them for the coming season. The offices were agog with excitement when he got there, for they had just received my telegram. He had worked for them before, so Mr. Birdnett sent him up as watchman, and incidentally to find out the truth of the affair. Birdnett had hinted that ten chances to one I was to blame, for there was apt to be trouble where two men were alone with one woman. These things Waite told me, little by little, after he had been with us for a week or two. He had gone to see Mack in the jail, and Mack had not said anything to him that could in any way be construed to mean that I was guilty.

Waite was not the working kind. He had not come up there to work, but to be watchman, and the only work he would do was to shovel snow when it was necessary. He talked also to the Indians, however, and uncovered some evidence that was very important. It seemed that Mack, in a burst of pity for an old Simsian Indian who lived in the village, and who had

been most wantonly robbed by Tom Jimmy, another Indian, had told the old man not to mind, for he had a trap-gun up in the cannery fixed up for Tom Jimmy.

Waite hurried to town right away, and got the Marshal to come out and get a statement from the Indian. I was relieved, but also rather sorry that the evidence was becoming so complete. If Mack had been accused of setting a trap-gun it would have been different, but he was accused of murder, and I knew he was not guilty of that.

Waite and I often talked the matter over with all of its pros and cons. Mack had often said that he would just as soon kill an Indian as one of their dogs; but in all his dealings with them he had been kind and friendly, so I felt sure that his setting the trap was more a matter of spite against the men who had robbed the cannery, and as proof of his authority over me. Still, setting a trap-gun in such a way was so criminally dangerous that it surely must be discouraged in every way possible. But to accuse the man of murder—no, no, that was not justice. Waite and I agreed thoroughly. Indeed, he was a very agreeable sort, and remained a good companion the rest of the time we were at Chilkoot.

The sun rose higher in the sky every day now, and one day in February a beam of it reached the outer end of the wharf through a gap in the top of Mount Rippinsky. I had watched this sunbeam coming nearer every day, and had anticipated what I should do when it reached the wharf. I ran up to the bungalow, hastily bundled up the baby, and told Marian to follow me. We paraded down the walk to where that spot of golden warmth came over the mountains to us,

bringing hope for better days. It was the first sunshine Marian and the baby had had since we had left the ranch, and we all greedily soaked in the glory of it till the warm life-giving sun glided on behind the spruce tops, and the cold of the shadowy winter sent us back to the house, where great spruce knots crackled and spat in the heater and the fire blazed hot in the kitchen stove.

THE TRIAL

CHAPTER X

THE TRIAL

In March Marian and I were subpœnaed to appear before the grand jury in Juneau. We packed up our goods, and stored them in one end of the living-room of the bungalow, leaving them in Waite's charge, for we had no idea when we would get back.

It was Sunday morning when we arrived at Juneau, and as there was no court we made our way to a hotel, and then looked around the town.

There were so many interesting things to see and to explain, that we forgot the sinister business we had come there to perform. There were the great quartz-mills, from which a constant droning roar hung over the city like an ever-present mantle of noise; the tram-ways on the sides of the cliffs, along which the ore trains came rushing over long bridges and through tunnels with their cargoes for the mills; the great blasts from the mines that occasionally reverberated through the air; the sawmills with their freshly cut piles of lumber; the docks, where hundreds of gas-boats swarmed around the cold storages, unloading their catches of halibut, cod, king salmon, and other sea food in which the Alaskan waters are so rich. We walked out the Salmoncreek road to the dam and the great power plant that supplies light and power for the mines. We listened to the musical roar of the

dynamos, so different from the sounds we had grown accustomed to, that we thrilled and shivered uneasily.

Then there was the court-house on the hill, towering above the other buildings in its dark gray massiveness. In the cellar under it I had spent one whole year,* longing to be free to roam where I wished, to see the sun and feel the rain on my face. Sometimes I had despaired that I would ever get out, and I had cried aloud for the freedom that I loved. Now I was free, and I had attained the highest thing I could hope for: the love of a pure, sweet woman and a Viking son, born in the wilderness. I had tasted with her of the wild. The sun had beamed on us and the rain had drenched us, even as I had longed for it while I lay there in the cage. The cold north wind had stung our cheeks when together we had laboured against the winter through deep snow, and I had been dead tired, even as I had longed once more to be completely worn out—not from sitting on a stone bench in a cage worrying, but from honest toil, from climbing the mountain or carrying the pack.

I had done all these things, and gloried in the doing of them. I had loved and been joyful to the brim of human happiness, and now I was back in the shadow of that great gray house, not to enter, myself, its dark and gloomy cells where the rattle and clang of the locks and bolts spell sorrow and desolation, but to be a cog in the machine that was to grind another man in its terrible jaws. We were there, Marian and I, to help hang the man who for several months had eaten every

* My jail experiences are told in "An Alaska Man's Luck," and need not be referred to further.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

meal at our table, who had touched our baby lovingly, and with whom we had been friends in spite of the difficulties that sometimes came in the way. As I thought about it in the shadow of the court-house, where I knew Mack was idly walking about in the cage with no work to do, nothing but worry and despair, it seemed to me that I was the one who had been to blame for our misunderstanding. We would not, could not think of Mack as a murderer; and we hoped against hope that he would be found not guilty, and be set free. Surely he had been punished, so what was the use of hanging him, or keeping him always locked up like a beast?

On Monday morning we reported at the prosecuting attorney's office. It was the same man who had prosecuted me. He looked at me with a twinkle in his round blue eyes. He did not look so terrible to me now when I was out of prison. One after the other he took all the witnesses who had assembled into his private den and found out what we knew about the case, taking all the answers down in shorthand. I asked him if it were not wrong to try Mack for murder in the first degree, and he said no. Then perceiving that I was not antagonistic toward Mack, he said: "Don't make your answers too soft. Tell the truth as you told it in the hospital." He evidently had a copy of the proceedings there, for he was comparing notes while he was talking. "You've got to protect yourself. They're going to try to put the whole blame on you. They've even tried to have you arrested, but they had no other evidence than Mack's word. If they can, they'll have you in jail and Mack out. It's up to you to stop that."

"Who are they?" I asked.

"Mack, Birdnett, and Hellenburg," the prosecuting attorney said, and I was surprised. I had always thought that Mr. Birdnett was friendly toward me. But then, there was no telling what yarn Mack had told. I felt a little bitter about it. The poison that the prosecuting attorney had instilled into me was beginning to work. I was becoming part of the machine that was to grind Mack's destiny.

To Marian the old white-haired man told the same story. "They are trying to cinch your husband. You must forget any sympathy you may have for Mack. It's him or Svend, and it's partly up to you."

Marian came out white-faced and sober. She, too, was becoming part of the machine.

"Oh, Svend!" she cried when we reached our room. "I'm so afraid! Surely they know you are not the man who did it!"

"It's their game, Marian," I said, and held her close to me. "Because I didn't do it, it's safe for them to blame me. There's not even enough evidence to have me arrested, or they would have me in jail now. The prosecutor said so. It would have a great psychological effect on the jurors if they could get the chief witness under suspicion. That's their game, honey. It's the only chance Mack has, and I don't blame him. Don't you worry, dearest. They can't do anything to me. All we must do is to just tell the truth. If we feel sympathy for Mack, there is nothing that will do more good than to tell the truth. If the jury learns that, they will know that Mack was not guilty of murder in the first degree, and he will probably be let off with a small sentence."

I talked on, trying to console her, and to rest her worries; but the poison was working, and even as I talked I began to think of all the questions I would be asked, and to prompt myself in the answers I would give. I began to realize what it would mean to me if Mack, Birdnett, and Hellenburg succeeded in throwing suspicion on me. Even though there were no tangible results, I would carry a mantle of suspicion, and anyone who wanted to hurt me could say that I had been suspected of being a murderer, though they had not been able to get enough evidence to convict me. The thing that perplexed me most was Birdnett's attitude. Why should he step in, and take sides with Mack against me? Was it because he realized that I was safe enough from the law, and that he pitied Mack, and wanted to get him out? I thought at the time that that was the reason; but that was before I realized that Mack's conviction meant a successful suit for damages against the cannery on the part of the Indians. Surely, I thought now, Birdnett must realize the blemish that would fall on my career if this suspicion of murder were left hanging over me. It must be that Mack had convinced him of my guilt. Oh, the prosecutor's poison was working, and it was all I could do to preserve my ability to reason!

Mack's case was not called before the grand jury the next day, nor the next. We reported at the courthouse every morning for three weeks before it was called; and then we went in one by one, and told our stories to the twenty-four men who were to decide whether they were true or not. One is not allowed to divulge what is said before the grand jury, but there were members of that body who were very hostile to

me, and who yelled questions at me as if they were trying to make me angry, and who seemed to believe that I was lying to them. I came out, surprised and hurt by their pointed, insinuating questions. The law is a merciless machine that takes little heed of the sensibilities that come within its reach.

Mack's case was set for the 9th of June, and we were sent back to Haines.

Time flew remarkably fast. It seemed but a little while before we had to take the baby to town again, establishing him with his "Grandma Lindholm," and depart for Juneau.

The prosecuting attorney's poison had ceased to work. We had talked the matter over many times since we had come back from Juneau, and we were far from any hatred for Mack. He was to be tried for murder, when he had set a trap for a thief and had shot an innocent man. If he had believed, as he had said in the Commissioner's court, that I had hurried to town to accuse him of murder, then we could not blame him for fighting back with the only weapons he had—lies. He thought I was trying to get him deeper into trouble, and if he lied we could not blame him, for he was lying to save his life. We would do all we could to get him acquitted of the murder charge, in spite of what he might say about me. Thus our consciences were not clouded as we walked back and forth on the deck of the steamer in the sunshine.

The journey was over only too quickly. Round Douglas Island we steamed, and into Gastineau Channel, narrow, deep, and beautiful, to where the four picturesque towns lie along the shores, clinging to the sides of the mountains—Treadwell, Douglas,

Thane, and Juneau, two on each side, so close together that they merged into each other.

The big craft sidled slowly up to the dock. The gangway was shoved over the side, and amidst the crowd of passengers we walked up-town to our hotel, and made ourselves at home. Once more we were in the shadow of the court-house.

Mack's case was called the next day. We sat in the court-room watching the drawing of the jury. It was a special *venire* of thirty-six citizens that was drawn; and the marshals and special deputies were sent out to round them up. The town was not very large, and they soon came filing in, singly and in small groups. Most of them asked to be excused, and gave their reasons. One had business to attend to, another could not hear very well. One was running a bakery, and had bread in the oven: this brought a laugh from everybody in the court-room, and the Judge told him to hurry back to his bread.

Another bunch of names were drawn from the box, and the deputies and marshals were sent again to bring them in. One hundred and fifteen names were called before the necessary number of veniremen to draw a jury from had been assembled. Mack came in, guarded by a jail guard, and sat down by his attorney before the jury-box. He looked calm and indifferent, though quite pale, and a little thinner, I thought. But one grows thin in jail, and pale for the lack of sunlight. He did not look around the court-room, but kept his eyes on the wall, as was his habit, without emotion or expression on his face.

We were sorry for him, Marian and I, and I was a little bit ashamed that I should have hesitated before

in my attempt to help the unfortunate man, or that I should for a moment have placed the suspicions of people who did not trust me before the life and liberty of this man. One by one the jurymen were called to the box, examined, questioned, counter-questioned, by both the prosecution and the defence. It was a wearying process that took all day and till ten o'clock that night. Then a jury was selected, and the court adjourned till ten o'clock the next morning. Again we sat in the court-room watching the proceedings till the trial began, when all the witnesses in the case were asked to leave the court-room. Mack saw us as we rose to leave, and as our eyes met I thought a faint sarcastic smile flickered on his lips. I could almost hear him say: "You'll get yours after a while."

We sat outside in the corridor with the many other witnesses against the prisoner, for there were none for him except the superintendent, Mr. Birdnett, who came just before noon, looking haggard and worn. A man came up from the street, and seeing me, came over and told us that the Chilkoot cannery had burned to the ground the night before, and that Birdnett's only son had broken his leg on the occasion. No wonder the superintendent had looked haggard. He was careful, it seemed to me, not to come near me in the corridor, but I met him face to face in the street during the noon recess. I asked him if the news I had heard were true. It was, and I said I was sorry. It was the only thing I could find to say to express my sympathy, but he seemed uncomfortable, and not easy to talk to, so we parted.

In the afternoon the witnesses began to be called in one by one. Most of these were Indians who had

heard the shot, and had seen Mack and me right after the killing. We could not hear what was being said in there; the voices sounded like the buzzing of great flies, though sometimes they rose to a roar when someone grew excited and talked in loud tones.

Marian was called in. I wished her God's grace. I had no idea what they would attempt to make believe about her, and I was inwardly raging that she, of all people I have ever known, the sweetest, purest, and most innocently good, should be compelled to sit before a crowd of gaping lawyers, jurymen, and court-house hangers-on, and be harangued and cross-examined in the brutal fashion of the law. They did not keep her long, however, for Hellenburg was too shrewd a man to attempt lying about her. Any man by looking at her would know that she could never lie to get another man hanged. Only the prosecution had wanted her to testify; the defence had been too glad to get her sweetly innocent face away from the court-room. A woman like that could never love a man mean enough to set a guntrap, kill an innocent man, and then try to get another man hanged for it.

"They were quite polite to me," Marian said; "and, Svend, I don't believe they are going to try to accuse you." But she was not allowed to explain why, for the door to the court-room was opened, and the guard called aloud for me.

I pressed her hand and went in. I was a little bit frightened. The room was crowded with people, and they all stared at me as I entered. The court-room was still as death when I was sworn in. "Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

"I do." My voice rang over the room, and I thought I saw Mack smile grimly as he looked at the wall. Poor Mack! He was pale and wan!

I was ushered to a seat on the platform by the side of the Judge, the same Judge who had sentenced me to fifteen months in jail a few years before. There was an antagonism in the air. I did not feel as if anyone there was my friend. Most of the important witnesses who had been called before had been Indians, and they were testifying against a white man. I was on the side of the Indians. Was that the reason for the hostility that I felt in the looks of the jury and the spectators?

After an argument between the prosecution and the defence as to whether Mack's lawyer should be allowed to make an introductory examination of the chief witness, Hellenburg gained his point. He looked over a lot of papers, got to his feet, stared at me through pale eyes, went over to the edge of the open space, spat at the spittoon, then came back and looked insolently at me again for a moment before he opened fire in a loud, gratingly sarcastic voice: "What is your name?" he asked.

I stood up.

"Sit down," the Judge said; and I sat down again.

"What is your name?" the tall gray lawyer asked again, this time with infinitely more sarcasm in his tone. He could see that I was slightly rattled by not being allowed to stand up, for I was uncomfortable sitting there, and I felt that standing up would relieve me. "Svend Norman, sir," I splurted out, as I saw that he was about to yell at me. The "sir" came

involuntarily. It was a hang-over from the years I had spent in the Army and aboard ships.

"Uh, huh!" Hellenburg grunted. "Are you the Svend Norman who about four years ago broke into Mr. Ganti's store in Skagway, and stole some money out of the cash register?"

The prosecutor jumped up. "Your Honour, that question has nothing to do with the case. I object to that question."

"Yes, it has," Hellenburg said.

"I don't see what Mr. Hellenburg's question has to do with the case," the Judge said.

"I merely wish to introduce the witness to the jury, your Honour. I want to show the jury what kind of a man they have before them."

"The objection is not sustained," said the Judge.

"Are you the Svend Norman who about four years ago broke into Mr. Ganti's store in Skagway, and stole some money out of the cash register?"

"Yes, sir," I answered grimly, and the jury and the spectators sat up, and began to take more interest in the proceedings. The witness was to be hauled over the coals. All the shady moments of his past were to be brought to light. Here was something worth listening to.

"Uh, huh!" Hellenburg grunted, with contemptuous satisfaction showing in his voice. "Are you also the Svend Norman"—he sneered when he spoke the name—"who was arrested by the United States Marshal after attempting to get away with your ill-gotten gains, and who was charged with burglary and grand larceny?"

"Yes, sir."

"Uh, huh!"—with greater satisfaction. "Are you also the fellow who violently broke out of jail at Skagway, and tried to get away over the border to Canada?"

"Yes." I was beginning to forget the "sir," for the man was plainly not a superior. I felt as if he were a snarling thing, annoying me.

"And are you also the Svend Norman who was deported from Canada as an undesirable criminal?"

"I object to that, your Honour," the prosecutor protested loudly, springing to his feet. "It has nothing to do with the case, and Hellenburg is trying to make this trouble Norman had look like a dozen different crimes. I object to that question."

Hellenburg sprang forward. "Your Honour, this man is the chief witness in this case. Terence Mack is being tried for murder on this man's word. I am here not only to prove that Terence Mack is not guilty of this crime, but that Svend Norman was the man who set the gun!"

He shook his fist at me in passion as he yelled these words, then calmly went to the rail and spat, coming back squinting at me to see what effect this explosion had produced on me. There was great excitement manifest in the court-room, much whispering and talking among the spectators.

The Judge rapped his desk sharply. An expectant quiet again reigned. "The objection is overruled."

"Are you the Svend Norman who was deported from Canada as an undesirable criminal?"

"Yes."

"Uh, huh! I thought so." He smiled malig-

nantly at me, and I smiled serenely back, for I was not at all excited any longer. He had shot his bolt, said his worst. He would prove me a murderer. It did not seem so appalling as I sat there, now that I knew what he intended, for I felt that he could not carry out his threat. He was too violent about it, with an artificial fury, while I was genuinely telling the truth.

"And then, Svend Norman, when they took you to Juneau in chains, and locked you in the bad man's cage, you were too slick for your guards and broke out again, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"You are an expert jail-breaker, and have had all sorts of experience at it, haven't you?"—very, very sarcastically.

"Yes, I suppose so," I said, and looked at him calmly. This angered him, I suppose, because he was not able to get me flustered again.

"Is it not a fact," he yelled, pointing his finger at me, "that you are a revolutionary, an I.W.W. Anarchist?"

"No—at least, not that I know of." Everybody snickered a bit.

"You are the Svend Norman who spent fifteen months in jail here in Juneau?" he asked after a little pause, in which he fingered his papers violently, as if he had lost his train of argument and was angry with himself.

I said I was, and he told the court that that was all he wanted the jury to know.

Then the prosecuting attorney got up and asked me a few questions about what I had been doing since

my trouble in jail. Hellenburg protested violently against this, as it had nothing to do with the case; but the Judge said that if it was fair for one side to bring in the witness's past life, it was fair for the other side, too, so the questions went on. Then the prosecuting attorney asked me to tell the jury in my own way just what had happened at the cannery, all that I knew about it from the very beginning. I told them briefly, avoiding as much as I could of Mack's disagreeable ways when we were at work, for a truthful detailing of his conduct would have been enough to prejudice any jury as to his disposition. It was soon told, and after a few questions from the prosecuting attorney the cross-examination by the defence began.

At first I was asked a lot of questions in an attempt to shake my testimony, and when this failed Hellenburg took another tack.

"Is it not a fact that you and Mack were bitter enemies all the while you were together at the Chilkoot cannery?"

"No," I said. "At least, I tried to be as friendly towards him as I could under the circumstances."

"Under the circumstances, eh? Then the circumstances were such that you could not be very friendly? How about that?"

"Yes and no," I answered, for this was a question hard put. "If you want me to, I shall try to explain our relation fully."

"I'll attend to that after a while," the lawyer sneered; and then: "Is it not a fact that one of the first days you were at the cannery—in fact, as soon as the boat had left the dock with the superintendent and all the crew—you told Terence Mack that you were a

bad man, and that he had better look out, as you were liable to knock him in the head from behind if he tried to make you work?"

"It's partly true," I answered. "He was very rude to me——"

"I don't want to hear about that. I want you to answer 'yes' or 'no,'" Hellenburg interrupted.

"This question can't very well be answered 'yes' or 'no' and be wholly true."

"Let him answer the question his own way." The Judge spoke impatiently, and rapped on the desk when the lawyer began to argue about it.

"We were working in the kitchen," I told, "and Mack was very rude to me. He had been several times that day. He got my goat at last, and I told him that if he kept this up I was liable to lose my temper and give him a punch in the jaw. And I would have," I added.

"Is it not a fact that a few days after that, when you were in the cannery store and you thought Mack had his back to you, he caught you in the act of stealing money out of the cash register?"

"No. That's absolutely untrue," I said.

"Huh!" grunted the questioner, disbelief showing in his face. "And is it not a fact that a few days after that, when Mack had warned you not to steal any more, he caught you in the act of stealing some goods off one of the shelves in the store?"

"No. It is not."

"And is it not a fact that one day when you had asked to go into the cannery to get a sack of shavings from the carpenter's shop, and Mack had given you the keys, he came to the door when you were carrying

out the sack, and on examining it found that there were new fish-nets in the bag instead of shavings?"

"No. It is not true."

"Huh! No, I suppose not," Hellenburg sneered with much irony. "And now, Norman, is it not a fact that all the while you were at the Chilkoot cannery you refused to work, and that you threatened to kill Terence Mack if he should try to make you; and that the only reason he did not fire you off the job was because of your wife and child, who would be starving if he did?"

"No. It is not true."

The spectators and the jury, it seemed to me, were beginning to look at me with disgusted contempt. Hellenburg spoke very convincingly, and made me feel as if I actually had been the scoundrel he painted me. Was it a wonder that the other people believed him? If I were this kind of a fellow, then it would surely be probable that I had set the gun to get Terence Mack.

"And, Mr. Norman," the lawyer was saying again, "is it not true that you hated Mack with a deadly hatred all the while you were watchman with him at the cannery? That there were days on end when you never spoke a word to him, but went around with a scowl on your face?"

"There were days when we did not speak, yes. Mack——"

"He answers 'yes' to that question," the lawyer broke in, and looked significantly at the jury. "You hated that man enough to kill him, didn't you?"

"I did not."

"Now he says 'no' to the same question."

"I object to that, your Honour. Hellenburg is putting words into the witness's mouth that were never there. He is asking plural questions, and not letting the witness answer in full." The prosecutor spoke insistently.

"I am here to prove that Norman set the gun," Hellenburg yelled.

"I object to that kind of cross-examination," the white-haired prosecutor insisted.

"The objection is sustained. Mr. Hellenburg, you will confine yourself to single questions, and keep from addressing the jury during cross-examination."

"But, your Honour, I have proof that Norman set the gun——"

"The place for that is not here. We are trying Terence Mack now. Go on with your cross-examination unless you are through."

"The place is here," Hellenburg insisted in a loud voice. He was playing on the psychology of the jury, and had thrown legal proceedings to the winds. He was trying to drown the hubbub that had arisen among the spectators. "I'm going to prove——"

The Judge rapped violently on his desk with his gavel. "Mr. Hellenburg, I fine you ten dollars for contempt of court." And to the spectators: "If you people can't keep quiet, I'll have the court-room cleared out and the doors locked."

The trial went on.

"Mr. Norman, is it not a fact that Terence Mack, who was watchman with you at Chilkoot cannery, never allowed you to have the keys to the store, or to go in there by yourself?"

"Yes, that is true," I answered. "Mack trusted no one."

"Uh, huh! That speaks for itself." The lawyer spoke with satisfaction, and gave another significant look to the men in the jury-box. "Now, Mr. Norman, is it not true that you are a man of exceptional brain power?"

"Not that I know of," I answered, wondering what he was coming to now.

"Is it not true that, in spite of the fact that you have never received an education, you write books and stories whenever you get the chance?"

"Yes. I try to. It is my ambition."

The lawyer nodded his head, and looked through the corners of his eyes to the jury, as if he were sharing some wonderful secret revelation with them.

"I don't see what that has to do with the case." The prosecuting attorney was on his feet again, and I became a little impatient with him. Why not let them go to it, and revile me all they wanted to? The way the prosecutor had acted all the while made it appear as if the nasty things Hellenburg had asked me were the truth, and he didn't want to let the jury hear about them. Or was it that I liked the jury to hear that I tried to write? Maybe my vanity had a little to do with it.

Hellenburg explained that these were preparatory questions that would lead to important facts in the case, and the Judge sustained him.

"Is it not a fact that you are not a Christian, but believe in the paganism of Thor and Odin, and that you have visions? That one night when you were out hunting Thor came to you on the top of a glacier

and bid you fare forth, and lead the Norwegians to conquer America?"

That was too ridiculous, and everybody in the court-room laughed. Even the Judge and Mack had to smile. I was not allowed to answer and tell about the Norse mythology book that I had been writing on, and that I had been telling Mack about, for the Judge rapped smartly for silence.

"If that is all you have to ask, Mr. Hellenburg, we will consider the cross-examination at an end." The Judge spoke sternly.

The lawyer ruminated over his papers. He had made another mistake, I thought. He had broken the spell of disgust with which he held the jury. He might have asked any number of nasty, insinuating questions instead. He seemed to have lost his train of argument again, and he gave up.

The prosecutor asked me a question or two, and then they let me go.

Marian and I took a long walk that evening, out along the Salmoncreek road, where the spruce-trees spread their branches overhead, clasping hands as it were, sending out their spicy odours. In among the high ferns we wandered in the golden evening to the beach of the fiord, where the air was sweet and pure, scented faintly with the perfume of the wild sweet-peas growing in profusion among the beach rye, and the dainty odour of night violets when a breath of breeze came from the woods.

Man's intercourse was ugly, and full of disappointment and strife, but the world was beautiful, and the song-birds sang full-throated in the woods, and our love and the beauty of the world softened our memory

of the ugliness of the great gray house, as we walked along hand in hand in the evening, talking of our home and our child.

The next afternoon we were allowed in the court-room to hear the final arguments in the case.

Hellenburg went over the testimony item by item, emphasizing the parts that would serve him best, ridiculing or ignoring the rest, until he had woven a net of lies about me and the other witnesses that would have convinced any jury that I was a deep scoundrel, a man with an insane mania for revenge against the man whom I hated because he had caught me stealing; a man with a master mind who had engineered the whole wicked affair, had posted and trained the Indians in what to say, and had even made the United States Marshal believe "that Irish boy guilty of murder." It was an ugly story to listen to, and Marian shivered with indignation at the wickedness of the thing and the insolence of the man. The whole of the lawyer's argument was an arraignment of my character. I had fixed things so efficiently, the lawyer said, that there was nothing yet that they could have me arrested for, but doubtless, he said, some day the truth would be known.

Then the prosecutor had his say, and went over the burden of the evidence. How convincing it had been! Mack had never once protested his innocence when arrested, and there was absolutely no one who had anything at all to do with the case who had been able to testify for Mack, while the man Waite, who had been sent up by Mr. Birdnett to investigate the affair, had not been called as a witness for the defence, because he, like everybody else who knew anything

about it, knew that Mack was guilty. Although it was true that I had once been considered a bad man and had served a term in the Juneau Jail, I had since then become a respected citizen of my community, so much so that when Mack had gone away with the Marshal he had turned over to my wife the money taken in at the cannery store without even asking a receipt for it. All these things he told, and more, much more, quite as efficiently and convincingly as Mr. Hellenburg. Any disinterested person merely hearing the final arguments in the case would have had a difficult time deciding which one to believe.

I am inclined to believe that from the point of view of the jury Mr. Hellenburg was more than ever convincing in the rebuttal. He put more feeling and personality into it, and he never spoke of his client except in endearing terms as "that poor Irish boy" or "that good lad," and never of me without a sneer or an insinuating epithet, or an allusion to my supposedly vicious mania. At the very close of his argument, however, he took a sudden 'bout-face, and said that, after all, who knew but that both Mack and Norman were innocent, and that the gun had been leaning against the wall, lying on a table, or had even been carried and dropped by one of the Indians, who had then been afraid to tell the truth? This, I suppose, was a sop thrown to me for all the nasty things he had said; or maybe it was meant to still more stir the doubts with which the jury had been imbued.

The Judge charged the jury, going over the main points in the case, bringing out the apparent facts. If there was a reasonable doubt, their duty was to bring a verdict of "Not guilty," he said at last; and then

they filed out to the jury-room and the spectators left the court-room.

We were called down to the Marshal's office and paid our witness fees. Then we went for a walk along the docks to free ourselves from the depression that the whole thing had put upon our spirits. As we came back we saw Mack walking towards us. He was free. The jury had found him not guilty. We were too raw from his attorney's defence of him to want to talk to him, and we were relieved when he saw us and turned up a side-street. We were very glad, however, that he was at last free of the bondage that had held him for six months, and that he was not doomed to years of caged and miserable living.

MORE MINING AND A STRIKE

CHAPTER XI

MORE MINING AND A STRIKE

THAT same evening we made the final arrangements for the purchase and shipping of a cow and calf. She was not a very good cow, but there was no other one to be had. If we wanted a cow that summer we had to take her, as there were no cows for sale in Haines, and we could not afford to send to the States for one. She was pretty, though black, with long even horns, a pleasant sort of face, and great, beautiful eyes. The calf was not hers, but was a thoroughbred Holstein bull from registered stock. We did not need him particularly, and we had to pay a good deal for him; but there had been no new stock in Haines for some time, and we knew the fine animal would be appreciated there when he grew up. It was with a feeling of relief and accomplishment that we started north the next morning with our creatures.

Viking's Cove flourished that spring and summer. The potato crop came up in good shape in spite of our absence, while the turnips, rutabagas, carrots, and parsnips grew splendidly. We had new potatoes and green peas in the middle of July, and string beans, onions, lettuce, and greens galore. In the woods the berries blessed the world by their abundance. The blueberry-bushes were weighed to earth by their fruit, till the berries lay on the green, fragrant moss. The raspberry plants we had brought over from McRae's

bore fruit for the first time, as did the gooseberry plants and the various kinds of currants that had been sent to us from the Government agricultural station at Sitka. The Normans on Viking's Cove lived abundantly on milk, vegetables, and fruit.

Then there was the flower-garden around our cabin that Marian had made. It was her domain up there by the lake; mine was on the beach and in the clearing. There were sweet-peas and nasturtiums, climbing their way up the sides of the cabin, pansies and violets in the beds in front of the porch, great long rows of sunflower plants along the path down to the lake that grew and grew, taller than Marian or me, but did not bloom till late in the fall. We planted corn up there and tomatoes, but while the latter bloomed there came no fruit, and the corn only grew stalks with feathery plumes on top. Around every tall stump in the little clearing were nasturtiums or sweet-peas climbing and blooming, and in the rich soil between the stumps and great boulders that lay strewn around there were beds of turnips, carrots, radishes, lettuce, and greens, and long rows of peas and string beans, handy to the kitchen door.

The book, too, progressed in this period, for our comparative prosperity seemed to be a spur to my ambition. It was plain from my experience in Juneau that my past was not yet forgotten. I was still Svend Norman the Outlaw in the eyes of most people, and I had felt the distrust that many held me in. Merely making a home and becoming a good citizen would not entirely wash away the stain of my mistake. That was plain from the way in which I had been raked over the coals by Mack's lawyer, and by the dis-

inclination of the Judge to have the reviling stopped. I had the feeling that all those who heard partly believed the disgusting things the lawyer said I had done. It would take time to live that down. If I should be called before a court of justice as a witness again would the opposing lawyers ask me if I were the man who had been accused of murder, and had adroitly got by the consequences? Doubtless they would, and it was not very nice to think about. Often I found myself going over that grilling in my mind, and I regretted that I had taken it all. But that was only at times. Mostly I wondered how to live it down, and gain the respect, the whole-hearted respect, of my fellow-men. I must work—that was the way. I must distinguish myself, not only as an honest man in my dealings with my fellow-citizens, but by developing the natural gift I knew, or thought, I possessed. I got up early in the mornings to work on the book long before Marian and the baby were awake, though sometimes she would rouse when I got out of bed, kiss me, and wish me good-luck. There were many mistakes, and crudities that I could see had to be changed. I spent many mornings, revising, rewriting, but I did not mind that, for I liked to do the work, and I felt that some day this would gain me the respect that I so coveted. In the daytime when Marian had nothing else to do, she would work on the manuscript too, typing at times or going over it, making notes on the margin where she thought perhaps I had not said just what I had intended to, or substituting a different word now and again. All this work was done in our spare time, and if we succeeded we both felt that we would deserve the fruits that were coming to us.

Although we began this season out of debt, and we now had our cow and calf, we were not out of our financial difficulties by any means. Most of our cleared land I had put into clover and timothy for the cow's winter feed; therefore I had to depend on the salmon for a grub-stake for the coming season, and the salmon failed me. I was fishing for the cannery on Litnikoff Bay, but I did not catch any fish. After we had put up our own pack in glass jars—which we always did first, as the early salmon are best—the fish practically ceased to run. I caught only about fifty, not enough to keep the nets in the water one week. There was a big run of sockeyes, too, that year, but they came in one great school, and went straight up the fiord, not stopping to play around in Flat Bay and Viking's Cove, as they usually did. There were thousands of them, and the fishermen that followed them up with their drift-nets made several hundred dollars apiece during the week the run was on. I gave up the game then, and returned my nets to the cannery.

It was then that Bob came again. Whenever he comes I expect some kind of a proposition that will make a change in my way of life; so when we heard his yell one evening as he approached the cabin through the woods, Marian looked at me and said expectantly: "That sounds like Bob. I wonder what's going to happen now."

"I'll bet something happens," I said, "and here's hoping there's some money in it."

He came swinging up the trail, singing a Swedish hunting-song, a gun slung on his shoulder and a small pack on his back. We stood on the porch watching him pick his way through the garden patches.

He stopped just before he reached us, and looked around him. The sun hung low in the west, and the evening was warm and calm. The air was fragrant with sweet-peas, violets, water-hyacinths that grew along the edge of the lake, and the balsam smell from the spruce-trees. The trout were feeding, jumping out of the lake and splashing back in, while a great white-headed eagle sat in the top of a high dead spruce-tree watching silently. Bob sighed. "It seems to me you have the most beautiful spot on earth here," he said as he came up the steps. "How do you do, Mrs. Norman, and Svend? God bless you! I believe you are the luckiest people I have ever seen."

We each took a hand, and I said: "Welcome home, Bob. Hope you can stay a while this time."

"I'd like to, Svend, but I have got to go back in the morning, and I want to take you up to the mine with me."

Marian and I laughed. "I told you so," she said.

"What?" Bob asked.

"I was just telling Svend that something would probably happen since you had come on the scene. What are you going to do with my husband? Can't you take me too?"

He smiled. "I wish I could, Mrs. Norman, but there's no place up there fit for you and that baby boy. We work down in the creek now, you know, and the cabin at Kingdom Come is too far away from the camp."

We talked the matter over. The fishing was done for the season, and there were only a few potatoes to dig; my hay was cut and shocked, and half of it was in under the roof of the shed I had made for Betsy's

temporary shelter till the barn was built. We needed money, and Bob offered me five dollars a day and my board. He was short of men, and was afraid the mine would have to close down unless he got at least four men. A good deal depended on the work accomplished this season, for they were in shape to strip a large piece of bedrock. Just at this critical moment a lot of the men had got into a fight and quit, so Bob's need was urgent.

It was easy to dispose of Marian, for Martin Madson had been over a few days before proposing that she should go to town and put up his berries on half-shares. Although he lived at his ranch mostly, he had at his house in Haines one of the finest berry patches in the country around, his plants producing from a hundred to a hundred and fifty berries each. Marian, who loved canning and preserving, was anxious to take advantage of Martin's offer, so that worked out very conveniently. After taking all these things into consideration, I promised to go up to the camp as soon as possible, and Bob hurried away that same night, for he was anxious to get his other men and get back to work.

Thus it happened that I made great haste in fetching up the last of the hay, while Marian filled our few remaining jars with blueberries, which were easiest to pick and can.

One morning, a few days after Bob's visit, a procession set out for town. There was the cow, Betsy; the calf, Paul Petersen; the dog, Blister; the cat, Kai Shovelisky De Moccadelle, carried by Marian, who had also a small pack; and I with a large pack, atop of which the fat young Viking perched, fastened

so he could not fall off. Travelling thus was not without its difficulties, for Betsy showed a tendency to make passes at Blister with her horns, and Blister, for safety's sake, walked directly on our heels regardless of the fact that Betsy might make a mistake and swing too far, horning a human instead of the dog she aimed at. Then, too, I had an unwieldy pack for fat, pink young Edmund was having the time of his life lurching gleefully from side to side. More than once I nearly fell on the beach where the boulders were slippery and the footing precarious. We spent the whole day going to town.

We were soon settled, for here in the northland we get accustomed to adapting ourselves to quick changes. We found pasture for the cattle, I brought up an order of groceries from the store, and Marian was then established in her new home.

The next morning I went up the river, riding in a motor-truck. I would really rather have walked, as there is enough to look at on that trip for a day's journey, and it was a shame to concentrate it all in an hour or two, having one's æsthetic sensibilities constantly jarred and bumped into oblivion by the truck bouncing over rocky lumps and lurching through deep-cut ruts. But the beauties of Nature and the joy of the trail must give way to the jarring rush of civilization and the hurrying blindness of industrial necessity.

I was glad to find that the bridge at Wells had been deemed unsafe for such heavy trucks, so I must walk the remaining eighteen or nineteen miles. I gladly slung my blanket-roll on my back, and soon limbered up my stiff muscles, running over the road through

the alder thickets and deep cottonwood forests of Klihinah Flats. This was life worth living. With the sweat streaming down my face, I climbed the grades of Sunshine Hill, where the raspberry-bushes leaned invitingly over the road. Memories of former trips over this same road came to me as I ran along, grabbing now and then a handful of berries. I had come this way when I was an outlaw running away from my pursuers, hurrying on with strange adventures ahead and behind.

Then Marian and I had come over this same road hand in hand, singing and laughing; even since those days, how things had changed. Still, she was the girl of my dreams, and now we had a son. It seemed too wonderful. And as I ran along the trail a lump came into my throat. How God had been good to me! All that I had wished had come true. The fulness of love, my child, my home, and now, soon, my book; for I felt that my book was on the way, and would be a reality sooner or later if only I worked hard enough. And I would work. It was joy to work. It was life to struggle. Leisure was but an opportunity for struggling harder, and pleasure but the love of moving building, creating the things we desired. I spurted on with a whoop of joy. hat a wonderful philosophy I had stumbled on to! And I knew that for me at least it was true.

Cottonwood Point and Herman Creek, where dog salmon come up to spawn, and where there were many tracks of bear, I passed at a dog-jog, and almost before I knew it I had reached Porcupine. The Porcupine Gold-Mining Company had worked out the richest diggings, and had ceased to operate. The new com-

pany that Bob had helped to form controlled the upper portion of the river, and were sending enough tailings down to swamp the other company if they had tried to work. The trail led through the deserted diggings of the old Porcupine Company, as well as the companies that had mined before on that rich creek. Among the tall brush in the bottom of the creek and in the woods everywhere near by lay pieces of machinery, old donkey engines, great lifts, and rusty cables strung from bluff to bluff. There were old flumes, and rotten pipe-lines fallen to pieces from age, which the heavy brush and tall grass were doing their best to cover up. Man had turned the bottom of the creek inside out, robbed it of its riches, and hurried on, and now Nature was covering up the signs of the struggle. The trail to the new diggings led over the old Porcupine flume, that once held the whole river while the men were working the bottom of the stream for its gold. A million dollars had been spent building this one-mile waterway; but doubtless the company that built it had taken many times that much gold from the gravels beneath it. Then the way led up the side of the mountain again, for great steep bluffs stood up from the river's edge clear up to the timber-line, where the wide green patches of alder covered the sloping mountain-sides, and where long tongues of the forest pierced up through like the points of an advancing army. In one of these tongues of spruce and hemlock the trail forked, one branch leading sharply down, and on a shingle nailed to a great spruce trunk was written: "To Glacier Mining Company."

I went switch by switch down the almost perpendicular mountain-side. The noise from the rushing

river came up in a steadily increasing roar, but through it I began to hear the rattle of a winch and the crashing of boulders as they were poured out of the stone-boat on to the dump. Over a last rockslide, and I was in the bottom of the canyon, where a bunkhouse and cook-shack clung close to the side of the hill in a curve of the canyon, and where a short new flume carried the burden of the river while the miners were down in the pit rolling boulders into the stone-boat to be hoisted out by the hydraulic lift.

It was almost supper-time, and when the men came out of the pit I made myself at home with them in the bunkhouse, telling the latest news of the outside world and learning the gossip of the camp. They were mostly men who had made the country around Haines their home, and they all knew me or had heard of me, so there was no need to spend time in getting acquainted.

"Now we will make the boulders fly," Bob shouted when he came up from the lower end of the flume and saw me. "I'll bet Svend can roll more boulders than any two of you."

"You ought to let us have him on the night shift," said Jack, who was leader of the night workers. "Fat here is getting pretty light in the poop."

"You go to the devil!" Fat shouted. "I can roll as many boulders as you can."

"You're danged right, you can." Jack laughed at Fat's violent assertion of his prowess. "I don't have to roll boulders. I'm the boss."

"You ain't bossin' me," Fat insisted.

"Don't need to. You're fool enough to work without it."

Everybody laughed. "Svend's on the day shift," Bob announced. "He's not like Fat. He's got to be watched, and I'll do the watching." The laughing was on me this time.

The cook's gong banged, and we all tumbled out, jostling and pushing, to the cook-shack, where supper was on the table. We all ate ravenously, for I had not had a bite to eat since morning, and standing in cold water wrestling with boulders gives men appetites that are astonishing.

We ate fast and with little talk, for that is the way of camps. The men knew that the cook wanted to get at his dishes, and be done with his work for the day. We filed back to the bunkhouse again, one by one, as we became full. Pipes were lit, and wet clothes were taken off and hung on the rafters around the big heater in the centre. The night shift had gone to work right after supper, and the bantering of Jack, Fat, and Scotty was moved to the pit. Talk lagged, and one by one the men made their scanty preparations for bed and rolled in. A day spent wading round in the rushing water, prying loose the boulders, pitching and rolling them into the stone-boats, followed by a full meal and a warm room, makes men sleepy and dull; and soon the last one in blew out the lamp, and only the snores and heavy breathing of tired men could be heard.

How different this was from the life I had led for the last two years or more! How different from our own little cabin, smelling of spruce pitch and cleanliness, and our clean, white-sheeted bed standing by the open window—how different from that was this close, hot, smelly place! I had not realized before

what a change Marian had made in my life, or how much my finer sensibilities had been developed. Before my marriage I had been quite at home in a hot, close bunkhouse, but now I felt like a stranger very much out of place. The sweaty smell from the woollen clothes drying by the stove was unpleasant to my nostrils, the snoring of the tired workers sounded strange and weird. The dear girl! I wondered if she were sleeping, and if she, too, felt strange and lonesome. I was drowsy. "Good-night, Marian," I whispered, and then sleep came; and it was only when the cook's gong sounded in the morning that I realized that I was once more a worker in a mining camp.

A sixteen-foot flume had been built for a stretch of some five hundred feet, close enough to the side of the mountain in the narrow canyon so that there was room to mine beside it. The bedrock flume was built under it and alongside, and it was so ingeniously arranged that the gravel tailings it carried were spewed out into the main current of the big flume and thus carried down the stream. The bedrock flume had been worked up the creek on a lesser grade than the creek itself, and bedrock had been reached some fifteen feet from the surface in the last pit they had worked before I had come up. They had only been able to clean a space of about six feet square, and had not taken much gold, which, so I understood, was the reason some of the men quit, as they had a share or two apiece in the stock of the company.

The new pit that we worked on the day I started was some forty feet square. There would be at least thirty feet of bedrock to clean when we got down.

Bob handled the hydraulic "giant" washing the gravel down the sluice-boxes and over the riffles that were fastened in the first boxes of the bedrock flume. The terrific stream of water tore away the cemented gravel from the boulders, and rolled them over and over down into the pit. While this was going on, part of the river was let through a spillway in the dam, and it rushed down through the pit, helping to carry away the gravel through the flume. We men walked along the bedrock flume with great paddles made from planks, dislodging any congestion of boulders and helping the gravel along by sticking the paddles down broadside on, letting the swift current force them along on the bottom of the flume, brushing loose any settled sand and gravel. Then when a lot of gravel had been washed down, Bob made a signal, for the roar of the giant and the rushing water in the pit was so great that no human voice could carry very far through it, and Toni— a young lad who had spent the whole season there—ran to the gate in the pipe-line, closed the valve, and then ran to the dam and closed the spillway. The water in the pit sank lower and lower, disclosing a great heap of clean-washed round boulders. Toni, who was also the winchman, hurried to the derrick, that was perched over the beginning of the bedrock flume, and lowered the bucket, or stone-boat, into the pit. Bob and the others of us filled it with boulders that were too big for the water to take through the flame, and Toni hoisted them out, and dumped them into the former pit around and behind the derrick. When we had taken out all the loose boulders and pried up all that were in sight and disposed of them, the water was

turned in again from the spillway ; the giant spat like a rifle when the water was turned into its nozzle, and then when the full pressure came on it set up a steady, deafening roar, making sand, gravel, and great rocks fly into the air, as it dug down, goring, ripping, and tearing its way through, washing the sand and gravel down into the boxes and away down the river.

Thus all day long we alternately rolled boulders and paddled in the flume. We worked hard, for this was a new company that had not yet had time to prove that there was much gold in their claims on the creek, and we were interested to know. Besides, Bob, who was superintendent and foreman, was one of us. We felt that he was our friend, and not our boss. We were all anxious to get as much work done as possible, and we did our best.

The night shift was only going to put in a half-shift that night, for there was a lot of freight at Porcupine that had to be brought up, and they were going down to get some of it. This gave me an idea, and I asked Bob if he would give me overtime for packing a load up after supper. He demurred, for ten hours in the pit was enough for anyone, he said. I agreed with him, but I wanted to make as much as I could, and so I insisted on knowing what he would give me for bringing up a load in the evening.

"We usually take a half-shift," Bob said, "and a fifty-pound pack."

I said I would pack fifty pounds up for four hours' pay, so the night shift went to work that night while I went down the trail and brought up a case of milk which was most needed at that time. It only took

me three hours, and while it was hard work carrying the load uphill, and almost as hard coming down the switchback trail, it was relaxation from the work of bending over, rolling, and pitching the great stones, that I had done all day. The day shift were all asleep when I came back, and I crawled in too, as soon as I had stripped off my wet underwear and put on dry clothes. I felt none the worse for the trip the next day, and offered to do all the packing for the company at the rate of four hours' pay for fifty pounds. Bob agreed to this, and for the next ten nights straight, I went down the trail to Porcupine, bringing up from fifty to seventy-five pounds each night. Thus, instead of getting five dollars, I was getting from seven to eight, and one night I doubled my wages by packing up a hundred and ten pounds. This was not good for me, however, for I hardly slept that night. My heart would not stop pounding, and I lay there and sweated and sweated, till when morning came I was limp and tired. But breakfast helped, and during the day I recuperated, until, after supper, I was as well as ever, and ran over the mountain again for another load.

By this time we were nearing bedrock, and had, in fact, already uncovered several high spots of it, when word came that four of the main stockholders of the company were coming up from Seattle to see the pit cleaned up. They arrived at Porcupine one evening just as I came in from the mine to get a pack. I was introduced to them, and immediately the president of the company asked me to pack his blanket-roll up for him. He was not used to that sort of thing, he apologized; and that was not hard to believe, for he was

stout, and looked very cityfied. They were going to camp in the bunkhouse of a deserted mine on Cahoun Creek, which was a couple of miles distant from their own mine.

As there was a trail from Cahoun Creek to our diggings, I took my ordinary fifty pounds and strapped the president's pack, which weighed another fifty pounds on top of it, and announced that I was ready whenever they were. All four of them were anxious to see the mine they had sunk their money in, and we started out in single file over the trail to Cahoun Creek.

It was a bit of bravado on my part to take that heavy load, and I would have suffered for it had the four of them not been so soft. Three of them packed their own blanket-rolls; and the president, being portly, probably packed the heaviest load of them all. We stopped every few minutes to rest, and I remained cool and comfortable with my hundred pounds while the perspiration was streaming down the faces and hands of the city men. Though they were moneyed men, no doubt respected and admired in their own community, and probably very much wiser and more learned than I, who was only a worker, still I did not feel that they were my superiors as I led them up the steep mountainside, coaxing them to make better time because I knew that dusk was approaching, and in the dark they would have a still more difficult trip.

Dusk was very close when we reached Cahoun Creek, and though the city men were tired from their climb, their eagerness to see the gold-mine overcame their desire to stay and make camp, so they stowed their blankets away in the bunkhouse and we all

started out for the mine. I had only fifty pounds now and felt very light, and I was much flattered by the constant shower of compliments with which the mine-owners deluged me. They were so tired, being soft and unused to that sort of thing, that they thought it was marvellous that I could work all day and then pack a load without being tired at all.

By the time we reached the camp it had grown dark, so the stockholders did not get to see much of their mine that evening. They were so tired, however, that I doubt if they really cared, but were glad to roll into the bunks of the night shift.

Next day they milled about the pit, the flume, and everywhere, getting in the way of the stone-boat when the derrick swung around and scrambling for their lives. They sat for hours watching us as we picked out the gravel and the last boulders from off the bed-rock. We rigged up a siphon to suck the pit dry, set up a small sluice-box to run the pay-dirt through, and then began the process of cleaning bedrock. The gravel was picked from the crevices and holes in the solid rock of the creek bottom, and dumped into the sluice-box, where a small head of water washed the sand and the gravel down, and concentrated what gold there was in the riffles. Then the crevices were scraped out and rinsed off, one by one, beginning with the highest and working downwards. We found many small nuggets stuck in the holes and cracks in the bedrock. These we tossed into the sluice-box for the grand clean-up. The bedrock, however, was hard and the crevices were mostly smooth, not the kind best calculated to hold the gold. Only in one place at one side of the pit there was a small ledge of soft slate,

from which Bob picked out several hundred dollars in gold as he picked the soft rock to pieces and carried the muck to the sluice-box.

The night shift turned to in the afternoon, as they could not see to clean up at night, and with the whole crew working it was not long after dinner before we had scraped, brushed, and washed off every inch of bedrock in the pit. Then came the clean-up. The head of water in the small sluice-box was turned down till only about an inch ran over the riffles. Then the first riffle was taken up, and carefully rinsed off in the box to be sure that no gold was hanging to it. Bob took a piece of board, and stirred the concentrated black sand and gravel by pushing the board against the current. A little more water was turned in, and the lighter particles were carried away. Along the edge of the gravel and sand in the box a yellow border appeared. Heavier pieces than the rest were being left behind, looming up large in the bottom of the box under the water. Bob stuck his hand down, and tossed something to the president. It was a twenty-dollar nugget. There was another one, and another. I began to wonder excitedly if it were going to pay after all. The water was turned off, and Bob took what gold and heavy sand he could get hold of into a gold-pan. Then the other three riffles in the box were taken up, the same process being gone through till all the gravel had run out into the bedrock flume. Here there were four more riffles, that were cleaned up in practically the same fashion; and as there was no gold at all in the last riffle, we knew that we had all there was. Bob then panned out all the base minerals, separating the dust from the black sand

with a magnet after he had dried it over a fire, and there in the pan lay the yellow heap of virgin gold for which we had turned over tons and tons of boulders, gravel, and sand.

We were not told how much there was in the clean-up, but it satisfied the stockholders, and we immediately began extending the bedrock flume forward over the cleaned-up pit, moved the derrick ahead and the giant back, and began a new pit, longer than the first one and a good deal wider, for we wanted to follow up that soft ledge that most of the gold had been found on.

The stockholders had been with us for about a week, some of them working in the pit with us, others sitting on the derrick or flume watching us. Gust, who was a nervous, impatient kind of man, did not like to have them there. He insisted that they were watching him, and he grumbled about it in the bunkhouse one night when the stockholders had gone home to their camp. The rest of us laughed at him, for the men whom he found so objectionable were really very nice fellows. They worked with us, told jokes, and laughed with us, and most of us liked them.

But Gust said he did not like to have his bosses sitting around "looking down his collar," and he was in a very ugly mood about it. He would tell them to-morrow where to head in at if they came around. There was another thing that Gust complained of that none of us liked, and that was that we were working ten-hour shifts. Some time before the Alaskan Legislature had made eight hours the legal workday in all mines; and though Gust realized that he was getting a dollar more a day in this camp than he would get

anywhere else, he did not want to work ten hours. Every night we discussed this matter. Bob, Emil, and I took the stand that the wage was fair, the season was short, and we wanted to get as much work done as possible; while Gust and the rest of the gang were in favour of only working eight hours or were neutral. The days were getting short fast, however, and with every day that went by more of us began to think that ten hours was a long shift for that time of year, and that eight hours would be better.

On this evening when Gust rebelled against the constant presence of the big bosses on the job, the other issue came under discussion again. Gust had some papers from the outside, and in one of these there was an article about the Alaskan eight-hour law. A company could be fined a thousand dollars for working its men ten hours, and the men could be fined a hundred dollars apiece. Several companies were on trial at Fairbanks, though it had not yet been decided that the law was constitutional, and Gust felt deeply that we were violating this bit of favourable legislation. He insisted that we were fools to work ten hours, and declared that if the stockholders came back the next day he would deliver an eight-hour ultimatum and quit. We laughed at his vehemence and did not think that he would quit, for Gust was wont to blow off at regular intervals, and he had promised to stay the season out when he came up, though, of course, he had not known then about the danger of this eight-hour law. He was in a bad mood when we began work the next morning, and he vented his temper viciously on the unoffending boulders in the pit, rolling, lifting, and tossing them till the cords

stood out on his temples. When a Swede begins to work like that he is dangerous, and the rest of us kept away from him; for it was better that he should wear off his primitive anger on the heavy work than on one of us. He kept his eyes on the side of the mountain where the trail zigzagged down from Cahoun Creek, and when the four stockholders came out of the woods up there five hundred feet above us, looking like pigmies crawling along, he threw his crowbar clattering down among the rocks, shook his fist at the approaching quartette, and with a Scandinavian oath that fairly crackled with fierce primitive anger, he turned to Bob and said: "By God, I quit!" and walked up out of the pit to the bunkhouse.

Bob followed him, and the rest of us shook our heads and worked on. We did not like to see Gust go, for he was a splendid worker, brimful of nervous energy, always on the alert to give one of us a hand when we had a particularly heavy boulder to shift. He was full of jokes and yarns, and altogether we liked to have him in the camp.

Bob came back looking downhearted. "Can't do anything with him. He's bound on quitting unless we work eight hours and tell the stockholders to stay off the job." The foreman's eyes twinkled in spite of his regret. "It's too damned funny!" he burst out with a laugh. "I'm to tell those fellows to stay off the place because one of the men don't like to have them around."

It was funny, but labour was scarce. The young men had gone to the War and had not got back yet, while many others had gone to the States, lured by the higher wages. Due to an unusual combination of

circumstances, however, Bob had been able to collect a gang of superworkmen, such as one seldom finds. Everyone in the camp was a first-class worker, and most of them, like me, were friends of the foreman, and were doing their utmost for the welfare of the company. Gust was as good a man as could be found anywhere, and now when labour was scarce he felt his power, and in his wrath had delivered his ultimatum to the bosses.

"Can't do a thing with him," Bob said.

"I'll try if you want me to," I said.

"Will you?" Bob asked eagerly, and grabbed me by the arm. "By God, Svend! if you get him to stay, I'll—I'll—— Dammit! You know I'll say you are some class."

"How far can I go with him?"

"Go as far as you like."

"About this eight-hour business? If he insists on it? I'm half in favour of it myself."

"Do as you think best, Svend. We need Gust here, and I don't want the gang to start breaking up. Go as far as you like."

I went up to the bunkhouse. Gust was rolling his blankets. I went in and sat down dejectedly.

"What's the matter?" Gust inquired.

"Aw, hell!" I said.

He came over to me. "What's the matter, Svend? You're not going to quit too?"

"I've a darned good notion to."

"Are they getting on your nerves too?" he asked, looking out of the window to the other side of the canyon where the four mine-owners were just coming down the last bit of trail to the mine.

"Oh, they'd get anybody's goat!" I lied, for I wanted to get the anger out of Gust, and I could see that I was succeeding. "But that's not the worst of it—they'll be gone in a few days. Who's going to stack the boulders now that you have quit? I can't do it, because I haven't got the experience, and besides, I don't like it. A wall that I'd build would fall down and kill the whole bunch of us. You are the handiest man in the country at that. We're short-handed, anyway, and now I'll have to do two men's work to keep the derrick-man busy."

"Well, I can't go back on the job after quitting like this." Gust's ill temper was gone, and my rebellion made him want to keep me at work, for he was a friend of Bob's, and knew that if both of us quit it would damage the day shift fatally. "I don't want to work any more than eight hours, though," he added after a short pause, during which he was evidently contemplating going back to work.

"Damned if I like those fellows hanging around watching me!" I burst out. "I never could bear to be watched on the job."

"They'll be going out pretty soon," Gust consoled. "I heard they were going out on the next 'Jefferson.' That's four days from now. They'll have to leave day after to-morrow."

"I'll tell you what let's do," I said, sitting up straight and taking him by the arm. "Let's go back to work as if nothing had happened. Then to-night we'll call a meeting after supper, and vote on this eight-hour business. I'm in favour of it myself. The days are getting too short, and I won't be able to get my packing done on overtime much longer. If the

rest of the men say eight hours, it'll satisfy me, and I'll work eight hours and no more. Good thing the stockholders are here so Bob won't get the blame."

Gust unrolled his blankets, and we both went back to work, to the great delight of Bob and the rest of the gang. We made the boulders fly that day, and I heard the president say to Bob that this was the finest gang of men he had ever seen, and I couldn't help laughing to myself, wondering what he would think after the meeting that night.

At noon that day we debated the eight-hour question, and it was evident that we were all, even Bob and Emil, rather inclined to favour Gust's proposition that we send a delegate to the stockholders to ask for a lowering of the hours with the same pay, and for us to keep right on working while negotiations were going on.

That evening after supper we had our meeting, took a ballot, and, as Bob did not vote, it was unanimously decided that we should ask for an eight-hour day, and I was elected to go over to Cahoun Creek to present the outcome of the meeting to the mine-owners, and see what they had to say about it before we took any further action. Seventeen-year-old Fat said he was for rolling his blankets if we did not get what we wanted, but I was certain that it would not come to that.

So it came to pass that I went up the zigzag trail that led to Cahoun Creek that same evening. I was tremendously excited, for it was the first time in my life that I had ever been on such an errand. I tried to think of what to say, but I was at a loss even as to the beginning of my address. If Marian were only

with me, she would know what I ought to say. My feeling of equality with the stockholders was gone. They had met me on my ground, and I had bested them and felt their equal. Now I was to meet them on their ground, the field of mental struggle, and I was afraid. They had made their fortunes in the States, where only the keenest of business men survive the constant battle for riches. Who was I to pit my brains against theirs? I knew it must be a matter of diplomacy, for if I were to merely lay down an ultimatum or a demand, they would be angry and send the whole gang down the creek to ignominious defeat. They would be defeated too, but that would not benefit us. Our place was at the mine rolling boulders and getting paid for it, and our game was to work less hours for the same pay, while their game was to keep us on the job, getting as much work out of us as possible at the least expense. But would I be able to put the situation before them without making them hostile, as on the spur of the moment I had promised the men that I would? I had been in the bunkhouse then, and had felt potent because of their confidence in me; but now I was alone, realizing that very soon I would be facing four shrewd business men who would look at me and do their best to defeat me. I felt that I would have been willing to stay the rest of the season working ten hours, or even twelve or fourteen if it was required, but now the gang was bent on the eight-hour day, and would not consider taking less than five dollars for it. Oh, if Marian were only here to talk it over with me! She would help me to see clearly and lead me to say the right words.

But Marian was forty-three miles away, down in

Haines, taking care of my son and canning strawberries for the winter. I wondered if she were lonesome for me, and if young Edmund would know me when I came back. So, thinking about my dear ones, I forgot my errand till I came to the cabins on Cahoun Creek, and the president of the company saw me through the windows of their cabin and came out to meet me. He liked me, I believe, for he always smiled to me, and he embarrassed and flattered me in a friendly way by constantly alluding to my physical prowess.

They were just eating supper, and though I tried hard while they were eating, I did not get a chance to give them my message. After supper, when they had lit their cigars and I had refused mine because I did not smoke, the four of them settled back and looked at me through smoke-puffs, and Mr. Ward, the president, said: "Well, you have something to tell us, if I am not mistaken?"

"Yes," I said, "and I must ask you to let me tell you the whole story before you start discussing the proposition."

That was agreed on, and I told them how we had talked the eight-hour law over and over a lot of times; how their presence in the pit had worn on Gust's nerves, causing him to blow up violently and quit; how I had persuaded him to stay and work; and how the whole camp had voted to request a lowering of the hours with the same pay.

Mr. Smith, who was a real-estate dealer, snorted. "They got a gall!" he said with much acidity, glaring at me. "I'd send the whole bunch down the creek."

"That wouldn't settle the matter. It would only

delay the season's work, and we might get a gang that was much worse." This was Mr. Handcock, who was a hardware dealer.

Smith was not so easily disposed of. "They think they can do as they please. I know. I've had dealings with that kind before. If we give in they'll be asking for more money to-morrow, and the more we give the less they'll do. I say let's can the whole gang, and send for some new men, and a boss who knows how to handle them and keep them in their place."

"You're mistaken if you think you can get a gang of men from Juneau who will be as efficient as the men you have now," I said. "The crew that you could pick up on short notice to come up to work ten hours a day would be men who couldn't get a job anywhere else. I heard Mr. Ward say this very morning that we were the finest gang of workmen he had ever seen. Our foreman will tell you the same. We are not out on strike. We are merely making a request of you. If I didn't need this job, I wouldn't be here, nor would any of the rest of the men."

"You won't have this job very long," Smith sneered; but Ward broke him off impatiently:

"Come now, Smith. Don't let your ill temper get away with your common sense. The men have a right to ask for an increase in wages, and it's our business to weigh the matter carefully."

"That's the stuff!" Handcock applauded. "Now we're getting somewhere."

Smith scowled, and was about to speak his opinion of working men again, when Mr. Ward got up from his chair. "As I understand the situation," he said,

"the men feel that ten hours is too long a workday. They want to work only eight hours, but they want to get paid for a ten-hours day. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"Do you think it is fair for you fellows to ask ten hours' pay for eight hours' work?"

"I think it is fair for us to ask five dollars for a day's work. Rolling boulders, standing in the icy water, is hard work, and we may uncover a pot of gold for you that's worth a million at any time. I think five dollars for eight hours is a fair wage."

"What you think, and what you'll get, are two different stories," Smith volunteered venomously. "I'd——"

"Cut that out, Smith!" Ward exploded. "Dammit! You are only making things worse. If you can't talk sense, maybe you can be still. Now, Norman." He turned to me. "Could we be sure that you fellows wouldn't lie down on the job if we decided to grant your request?"

"The men down there in the camp are not the kind that lie down on the job. You needn't take my word for it. Ask anybody in Porcupine or Haines what kind of a gang Bob Carlson has, and you'll be told that those men are the best to be had in this part of the country."

"Bosh!" Smith said. "Offer five dollars and board down below, and we can have our pick from thousands of men."

"But we haven't got them here," Ward said impatiently, seeing that he was giving away his realization of the strongest card in our hard. "Let's go outside and talk the matter over," he said to his asso-

ciates; and excusing themselves to me, they went out into the dusk and stayed a long time, during which I could hear their voices rising and falling in the heat or argument. Smith, who had as much money in the company as Ward, was violently opposed to any compromise, I gathered from the talk that I could not help hearing. Ward and Handcock were willing to attempt some sort of a compromise, while Miller was undecided, though he was rather inclined to think, like Smith, that it would never do to set a precedent by granting such demands. After half an hour's argument they came back, saying they could not give any definite answer to the request as yet, but they would speak to the foreman and the rest of the men about it in the morning.

About noon the stockholders came down the trail, and went with Bob into the bunkhouse for a conference. I don't know what was said, but when the cook banged his gong and we came scrambling out of the pit, Bob looked worried and anxious. I waited until they had all gone in, then I went over to Bob, who was washing his hands by a leak in the pipe where the water squirted out in a fan-like shower.

"Be careful with them," he entreated me. "That Smith's a bonehead. He'd close down the camp just for spite. They're going to offer you a percentage of the gold taken out."

There was an uncomfortable silence in the cookshack, where the stockholders and the men ate at the same long table. Smith was sulky and glowered about him, Miller eyed the men coldly, while Ward sat in deep thought, and Handcock ate his dinner as if nothing had happened. The men were uncomfort-

able. They ate hurriedly, and left immediately for the bunkhouse. Soon we were all there, and shortly after the four mine-owners knocked at the door, entered, and sat down on the benches among us.

There was an awkward silence for a short while, then Ward cleared his throat and got to his feet. "Men," he said, wiping his broad forehead with his handkerchief, "Norman here came over to our camp last night, and told us that you had decided that eight hours was a long enough workday, but that you wanted ten hours' pay for it. Is that right?"

No one said a word, and I nodded when he looked at me.

"Now, men, before I tell you what we have decided to do about this, I want to tell you a little about this company. The stock in this company is not owned or controlled by one man, but by about twenty-five different persons. However, my associates here and I control a majority of the stock, and can take any action we decide on. Now, this company has invested practically fifty thousand dollars in this mine. The first year we did not accomplish anything to speak of. The second year we made some progress, got the flume built, and began to mine. High water interfered, however, and we only took out ninety dollars' worth of gold. This year we have a chance to do some real mining. We have already taken out a little over a thousand dollars. Now, men, you can see that we are in deep. It will take a lot of gold to get back what we have invested. You can see that we do not want to invest any more than we can help. On the other hand, we might strike it rich in the next pit and get our money back, and then some.

"Now, this company recognizes the right of the workers to collective bargaining. We realize that you men are working hard, and that you are entitled to all you can get for your labour. In my opinion, capital and labour ought to be partners; for their interests are common. Svend Norman here spoke last night of the Ford Factories and the profit-sharing plan, and suggested that we do something like that here" (I had not suggested anything like that at all, but I let him talk on).

"My associates agree with me that if you men had an interest in the mine you would want to get as much work done as possible. You would not care whether you worked eight, ten, or fourteen hours; the more you worked, the more you'd get. Now, our proposition is this: we are willing to board you, and give each of you two per cent. of all the gold taken out of this mine from to-day on as long as you work, and we agree to let you decide how long hours you want to work."

I did some swift figuring. Two per cent. of a thousand dollars was twenty dollars. So far I had worked three weeks and earned twenty dollars according to that scheme. Suppose there was a thousand dollars in every pit and we got out two pits a month, that was the most we could possibly do. It wouldn't pay unless there was more gold, and there might be less. Ward kept talking about industrial democracy, President Wilson, patriotism, and other things, so I couldn't think any too clearly. I looked at Jack, and he shook his head.

"We've faith enough in this creek," Ward was saying, "to invest fifty thousand dollars; now we ask

you to be good enough sports to invest a little labour. What do you say?" he asked, pointing his finger at Jack.

"Svend Norman is doing all the talking for me. What he says goes as far as I'm concerned," Jack replied quietly.

Ward looked around at the others, and they all nodded their heads in agreement, and Fat added with a bashful grin: "If you fool him, you'll go some."

Ward smiled to me. "Then it's up to you and me to settle this. We are offering you board and all the other cost of the mine, and each of you, including the cook, two per cent. of all the gold taken out from this day. It means, men"—and the president grew very solemn when he said this—"that among you, merely for the work you put on this creek, you are to receive thirty per cent. of the dividends on an investment of fifty thousand dollars."

I thought this over for a while. It sounded very liberal on the face of it. However, there might be nothing in the next pit. The company was playing absolutely safe. If we lost in the gamble, it would be that much the winner. If we won, they would be the still greater winners. I had long before figured the amount of my wages to the end of the season. I needed that much for the safety of my family in the winter. Had I a right to gamble with it? With the food and clothing of my wife and child? No, I had not.

I looked up. Ward had ceased talking, and sat down with a triumphant look, for he felt sure, I think, that we would jump at his offer.

"Gentlemen and fellow-workers," I began, "I

don't think I ought to speak for all of us in this matter. I can't very well do that because I don't know how anyone else feels about it, or what they want to do. But I'm going to speak for myself, and each one can speak for himself. I came up to work on the creek for two reasons. First, because I needed the job and the wages; second, because Bob Carlson asked me to come. I came with the expectation of doing all I could to further the interests of this company, which, as far as I know, has been liberal and fair in its dealings with its men. I also came with the expectation of getting five dollars a day in return for my services, and I figure that I need every cent of it. My wife and child need clothing and food for this coming winter. I don't feel that I have a right to gamble with my wages—that is, to gamble with my family's living. If I stay and work here, I'll have to be assured of my wages."

Ward rose to his feet. "It is plain," he said, "that Norman is in such a predicament that he cannot gamble with his wages, as he calls it, but that doesn't keep any of the rest of you from taking us up. We can deal with each of you separately, and if you want wages or dividends, it's all the same to us."

Jack got up. "As far as I'm concerned," he said calmly, looking straight at Mr. Ward, "I owe pretty nearly all the wages that I'd earn for a month to come. I don't think that I have the right to gamble with other people's money."

"That excuses you," Ward said, somewhat impatiently. "How about you?"—pointing to Gust.

"I'm a working man—not a capitalist, nor a gambler," Gust replied. "I live by earning my wages,

and when my wages don't suit me I go somewhere where they do."

"I think five dollars for eight hours suits me best," Eric contributed.

"I'll roll my blankets if I don't get it," Fat burst out half bashfully, and we all suddenly laughed at Fat's slogan, except the stockholders, who were looking a little worried.

"Do you mean to say," Ward asked incredulously, "that you don't want our offer?"

Nobody said a word. "I'm afraid that's it," I said apologetically when Ward looked at me.

"Do you understand that we have invested fifty thousand dollars? And that we are on the eve of the day when we shall begin to get some of that money back? Do you understand that this practically amounts to our giving each of you a thousand dollars' worth of stock just for your labour? It seems to me it is the fairest proposition that was ever made to a crew of workmen, and you turn it down cold! Don't you know that he who never risks never wins?"

"I'm afraid we are all wage-workers, like Gust said, and that we don't care to gamble with our wages," I said.

"I don't blame you," Ward shot back hotly. "But these other fellows. Why, dammit! It's the fairest offer I ever heard of, and they turn it down cold! Why don't you say something?" He looked around from face to face.

"Svend can tell you why," Gust said. "He does the talking for us here. He knows why we don't want your dividends."

Ward looked at me again. "By God!" he swore.

"I believe you are the man who started this whole trouble."

"I am sorry," I said.

"I started it," Gust said, and looked defiantly at Ward.

"We ought to send the whole gang down the river!" Smith cried angrily. He had been looking out of the window all the while, talking and swearing to himself.

"You shut up!" Ward flared back at him. "Didn't we agree that I was to do the talking?"

"It's plain to me that these men are a bunch of Bolsheviki. They think they've got us in a tight corner, and they think they are going to hold us up. If we give in we'll never see the end of trouble. They'll be asking for more before we get away. I'm for canning the lot and sending for a new gang from Juneau."

"Mr. Smith," Ward said sternly, "it was agreed that I was to do the talking in this conference. I ask you to be still or get out. How can we hope to come to an understanding with these men if we fight among ourselves? Cut it out!" He turned to us. "Men, it seems to me that if we are willing to chance fifty thousand dollars, you ought to be willing to risk a few days' pay. Why is it? Have you no faith in the creek?"

"It's like this, I think," I answered for the lot of us, for while Smith and Ward were squabbling I'd been thinking. "You people had the money to spare. If you lose it you will not go hungry. You will still be able to fill all your actual needs. It is sometimes hard to make a living during the winter in this country, and

if we lose out this summer, our wives and children may go hungry, or we may be thrown in jail for being destitute. That is a crime in this country. You are gambling with your surplus; but you are proposing that we should gamble with our lives, and the lives of our families. I don't see why you can't just as well let this scheme drop, and give us what we ask."

"We won't!" Smith exploded again, and Ward turned savagely on him.

"How in tarnation do you expect me to think with you yammering back there all the time? Good God! Isn't it enough that I have to consult with these fellows as if they were my business partners!"

It was evident from this that what he had said about industrial democracy and the partnership of capital and labour was chiefly talk calculated to make us feel good. He was just a plain boss, and it peeved him not to have his way.

He turned to me again after a sharp encounter with his angry friend. "Do you understand that there are lots of men in Juneau who would be glad to come up here and work ten hours for five dollars?"

"Yes, we know that. But it would take you a week or two to get them here. Then they might not be the kind of men you wanted. And if they learned that there had been a strike or a lockout, they would probably go right back where they came from. There's a shortage of labour now, you know."

"Am I to understand, then, that because of this shortage of labour which you claim there is, but which I am not at all certain about—am I to understand that you are taking advantage of us? And because we are at a critical time in our mining operations, and you

think we can hardly do without you, you are making demands of us? Is that right? And how do I know that if we give in you won't ask for more to-morrow in the same fashion?"

"To the last question: you don't know, but let me point out, that we have not gone on strike. We worked this morning, and we would be working now if you were not keeping us here talking to us. Your foreman will tell you that we are not the kind of men who take advantage of their employers. If we were, we wouldn't be talked of as the best men in the country. We are asking for a shortening of the hours because the days are getting shorter. We work every day in the week, and haven't much time to wash clothes or take care of them. When a man can't keep clean, he loses in efficiency; and if a man's employer doesn't care whether or not he has a chance to keep clean, that employer can't expect much from him. It's not much fun to work for a fellow who thinks you are no better than a hog. One reason you have such a good gang of men on this job is because Bob is our friend, and we know he does all he can for our good. If you are like that, and we feel that you have our welfare at heart, we will feel a good deal more like working our best for you than if you were like Mr. Smith, who would enjoy starving us into submission."

"You're damned right, I would!" Smith growled from the window seat.

"And even if we were taking advantage of you, you could hardly blame us. You are trying to take advantage of us when you mention the fact that there's lots of men in Juneau, while Smith would hold the necessity of our having to work, like a club over our heads.

I've seen the time on this very creek when there were more men than there were jobs; when wages were down to three dollars and board, and a man had to work like hell or get canned; and if he objected to anything, the Marshal was sicked on him. That was when the old Porcupine was running, and it doesn't necessarily mean that this company would do the same, though I believe Mr. Smith would if he had the chance. You could hardly blame the workers if they did take advantage of their employers now, since the employers took so much advantage when they had the chance. But we are not taking advantage of you. We work for a wage, and when we get a fair one we are satisfied. Till the days grew shorter and this new eight-hour law had been passed, we were satisfied to work ten hours; now that this law is passed, it is no more than right that we should conform to it."

"We don't object to that part of it," Ward hastened to say. "What we think unfair is asking ten hours' pay for an eight-hour workday."

"We figure we can do almost as much in eight hours as we can in ten, because we will be feeling better and have more incentive to work. If you want to buy a pair of better shoes, made of better material, you pay more for them, don't you? Would it be fairer for us to give you more for less, than for you, who have more than we, to give us less pay for more work?"

"I'm the president of a lumber company," Mr. Ward replied, "and when the eight-hour day was in question just that argument was used in favour of it. However, when we tried it the output was cut down in exact proportion to the cut in time."

"But a saw can only cut so fast. A man can roll boulders as fast or as slowly as he cares to. Make him feel that it is worth while, and he'll speed up. Make him feel that he's not getting enough pay, and he'll slow down right away."

"But how do we know that you'll do the right thing by us?" the president asked with a rather desperate look on his face.

"You don't know. But you have a foreman here who represents you, and if one of us doesn't do what's right, he'll soon send him over the hill with his blankets. But I can assure you that if you grant our request we'll all go to work just as readily as we did before this question came up."

"And if we don't grant your demands—if some of the men quit the job, would you be willing to stay and work ten hours with new men that we send up?"

"Gentlemen, the good Lord knows I need this job." I spoke clearly, for I wanted no one to misunderstand me. "I have a wife and a son, and I've not made much money the last few years. The summer is almost gone, and if I don't stay here it may be hard to get some other work to do by which I can earn enough to carry us through the winter. I want to stay here and work. I like Mr. Ward here, and Mr. Handcock too" (Smith snorted violently here), "and I would be sorry to see them disappointed in their season's work. But after what has been said here to-day, I'm more than ever firmly convinced that we are right in asking what we ask, and I think it is my duty to stand by it. I'd hate like hell to have it known through this country that Svend Norman was a coward and a scab."

"Then you mean that if we don't grant your demand you'll quit?"

"That depends on the other men. I'll do my utmost to get them to stay on the job, but if they decide to go—and I think they will—I'll have to go with them."

This was the climax. I had said it in plain language, and I could see that they had nothing more to say.

"We'll have to go over to the cook-shack and talk this over," Ward announced, and the four of them went out of the bunkhouse.

"Damn you!" Jack said to Gust. "If I have to quit now on account of your damn-fool notions, I'll knock the devil out of you."

"I'll roll my blankets," Fat said optimistically.

"You'll be quiet," I said, while they all laughed. "You came pretty nearly spoiling the whole conference. You're too young to speak."

"I'm not too young to roll my blankets, though. I'll roll my blankets with anybody."

"Mind you," Jack said to Gust again, "if I have to quit, you'll have to fight."

"Shhhh! They're coming," someone whispered, and there was a knock on the door.

"Come in." They filed in. Smith was red to the temples with rage, but Miller looked as if a load had been taken off his undecided conscience, and Handcock winked to me when he caught my eye. They sat down except Ward, who remained standing.

"Men," he spoke, and I thought his voice sounded rather happy, "we have talked the matter over. We have found your request reasonable, and if you men

will go to work and do your best, put a little more zest into it, and promise that you will stay with us till the end of the season, we will give you five dollars a day for eight hours."

"As far as I am concerned," I said, "I'll work as hard as I can, and I intend to stay till the end of the season."

"I'll stay as long as you want me to, unless I break a leg or something," Gust said.

"Me too, me too," came from the rest of the gang, and we shook hands with all the stockholders except Smith, who looked so mad that I was afraid he'd bite one of us; and then we ran whooping and shouting like a gang of schoolboys down to the pit, and attacked the boulders with a will and vim that would have gladdened the heart of the cruellest of mine-owners. Ward and Handcock came down and worked with us, and were as jolly and good-natured as if nothing had happened at all; and that same evening Gust told me on the quiet that he had been mistaken about those fellows. "That fat boss can roll a rock or two at that," he said.

The mine-owners put off their departure. They would wait for the *Spokane*, and none of us objected. We had got the best of them and felt inclined to like them, and they in turn, knowing they had done something for us, were satisfied with themselves and at peace with the rest of us—all except Smith, and we only saw him once after our difficulty.

FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES

CHAPTER XII

FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES

THE evening after our peace conference the cook slashed his hand while cutting meat, and had to be sent down to the hospital in Haines. Any one of us could have gone to the kitchen and given satisfaction, but Bob said we were too good men to waste that way, and he was about to send a message to Haines for another man, when I asked him if he had any objection to my wife's coming up as cook. Though at first he demurred and said that the canyon was no place for a woman, after I had suggested that a tent be raised on the other side of the flume from the bunkhouse, where there was a small indentation in the mountainside, just right for a tent, he gave in and asked me when I could get her there.

"To-morrow night," I said.

"To-morrow night! You mean the night after that."

"I'll get her here to-morrow night if you want her," I said.

"I don't see how you're going to do it."

"I'll start right now," I said; and going into the cook-shack, I took two beefsteaks and a couple of slices of bread, making a small package of them.

It was just seven o'clock when I started up the trail by Cahoun Creek, for Bob had asked me to tell Mr.

Ward of the accident, and say that I was going down to get my wife. When I got there the sweat was already streaming down my face and bare arms, for I was in shirt-sleeves that were cut off at the elbows.

"You watch for me to-morrow night," I told them after I had delivered my message, and Ward said:

"If you get back here with your wife by to-morrow night, I'll give you twenty-five dollars."

"I don't want your money," I laughed, "but you'll see me come down the hill to-morrow night."

I had no time to waste, for now that I had said I would make it, I knew I would have to save the reputation I so loved. It was wine to my soul to be admired and looked up to by strong men. I loved it as I loved life itself, and was willing to sweat for it. I had been rolling boulders all day, and was not as fresh as I had been in the morning, but it was downhill all the way, and at the end of the trail was Marian. My Marian!

Love for her swept through me like a rushing torrent of joy. I whooped and sprang ahead, sweeping down the trail in great long leaps that made the earth fly under my feet. I was going home to Marian. Who would not run all night to reach a wonderful woman like her! Who would not suffer fatigue and exhaustion when the goal was the woman one loved! What was a measly forty-three miles or so compared to the joy of taking her in my arms and holding her tight to my beating heart! "Oh, Marian, I love you, I love you," I half sang, half shouted to the still woods and the sky, for I was not ashamed of my love

for her, the love that surged through me from head to foot at the least thought of her. It grew dusk in the woods, though the sky was still light. I ran and walked, ran and walked. Not as I had run away from my prison in former days, scourged by fear of recapture and afraid of being seen; but with joy in my heart for the freedom that was mine, the strength of my body, and the love for the woman who was at the end of my trail, and whom before morning I should crush to my breast and cover with kisses. My wife, my sweetheart, my beloved! The strength I felt was wonderful. I did not lose my wind. I did not get tired. I only stopped where the clear creeks came splashing down the mountain-side to the road, and drank the sweet, cool draughts, that sent me spurting on with shouts of joy. In the Klihinah Flats I made as much noise as I could, for I had no wish to encounter any bears with only a pocket-knife for protection. I saw none in the thickening dusk, but I thought I heard one scrambling through the brush up the steep slope by Herman Creek, where the dog salmon lay thick in the water, and swam splashing over the riffled gravel bars where I crossed.

I ran on with a thrill, maybe of fear, maybe just excitement at being abroad in the night with the beasts of prey. Over Sunshine Hill, and down to Wells, I ran as one possessed. There was a light in Sam Whittaker's roadhouse. I knocked at the door and asked him what time it was. It was nine o'clock. I had come nineteen miles in two hours. At that rate I would get to Haines a little after midnight. Al Smith was there too, and said he was going up to Porcupine with the team in the morning. I asked him to wait

for my wife and me, and he said he would wait till twelve o'clock. He did not think I could make it, he said, but he would give me a chance. I ran on. It was pitch-dark now in the dense cottonwood forest between Wells and Kluck Wan, and I did not dare run very fast, but jogged along.

I forgot about the dogs in the Indian village, and had not even a stick to chase them off with when the first pack came charging out at me from under one of the first houses, circling around me in the dark and snarling, their teeth gleaming in the darkness. I was mortally afraid, and with my open pocket-knife swinging about me, I snarled back at them in the nastiest tone I could muster. I found a crooked cottonwood twig by the side of the road. It was light and would break at the first attempt to use it, but it was the only thing I could find, and if I went prowling among the cabins trying to find a better one, I knew I would get bitten. They came at me in packs as I advanced through the town, snarling, growling, and snapping their teeth. I snarled in return and drove them back by swinging my measly twig. Luckily they only came in small packs instead of doubling up, and encouraged by their numbers, charging me and tearing me to shreds as they would have liked to do.

But God walked with me that night, and before I knew it the Indian village lay behind, the forest closed in around me, and I ran again, singing and shouting, and stumbling occasionally, too, as the road was full of rocks, chuckholes, and deeply cut ruts, and it was dark.

I grew hungry towards midnight, and ate my lunch. I had long since laid Eighteen-Mile Ben's cabin

behind, but there were still thirteen or fourteen miles to go, and I was getting so tired that I did not care to run any longer. The springiness had gone out of my body, and the calves in my legs jarred when I ran, so I walked most of the time. The waves of joy that had swept through me at the beginning of my trip had subsided considerably with the spending of my energy, but I was still in high spirits, and my love for Marian was like the steady flood of contentment that it had been, in ever increasing quantity and quality, since she had come to live with me in the north. It was with me constantly wherever I went and whatever I did. For my son I was thankful, and I would have fought and died for him, but my love for Marian was of a different, boundless, all-including character. She was my life, my all! And after this month of separation I was coming home to her! Sometimes this thought made me want to leap ahead, but mostly, now that I was growing tired, it made me want to cry for the joy of it.

I hurried on, past the ten-mile post, the nine-mile, the eight-mile. Soon I was at the rocky points above Hyindustachy, where the medicine-man's grave overlooked the river like an eternal sentinel's post. I picked up a stout club from among the driftwood at high-tide line, where the fiord backs up and reaches the edge of the road. I was not going to be caught again facing hungry, vicious wolf-dogs with nothing to defend myself. But the dogs of Hyindustachy were all asleep and used to traffic, and I heard or saw none of them. I hurried on. Three miles, two miles, one mile—I was in town. There was her house. I entered the gate and called my love call to her. She

came to the window, and with a rush came to the door. "Svend! You're home! You're home!"

We laughed and cried as we held each other close. "I've come to take you up with me, Marian," I said. "Will you come?"

"You know that, Svend. I have been so lonesome here without you."

"We've got to go back to-morrow morning. This morning, by Jove!" I said, as I looked at the hands of the clock. It was just four o'clock. "I've got to get some sleep, Marian. I worked all day yesterday; and I've come from the camp, forty-three miles during the last nine hours."

"Svend, you husky!" She helped me upstairs and to bed.

I had meant to tell her many lovely things, and all that had happened since I had been away. I had meant to lie close to her dear self, and hold her lovingly in my arms, but I was exhausted, and hardly had the warm soft bedclothes nestled about my tired body and her dear soft hands tenderly stroked my face before I was asleep, not to awaken till the warmth of the sun touched my face through the window, the smell of frying bacon arose from the kitchen, and the white face of the alarm clock told me that it was seven o'clock. I was stiff and sore, and very sleepy still, but I had no time to lose, and, rolling out, called a joyous good-morning to my wife.

"You are not getting up yet, Svend, are you?"

"You bet. We'll have to leave here in an hour." I told her of the promise I had made, and entering into the spirit of the game, she rushed the breakfast to the table, ate hurriedly with me, washed the dishes while

I rolled our blankets, and then made young Edmund ready for the journey, while I ran down town to get Eric, the Swede, as he is commonly called, to take us up. He was almost ready to go on his regular trip, and I asked him to call around at our house on his way.

"You be ready!" he warned me. "I won't wait five minutes for you!"

I laughed, for Eric is always so; though in reality he is exceedingly accommodating.

We were ready when he came rumbling along with his truck, tooting the horn loudly. Our luggage was swiftly thrown on, Marian placed on the seat beside him with Edmund on her lap, and I on top of the load of freight, braced in among a lot of sacks of grain or something like that. Before we had gone a mile I was asleep again, and slept most of the way to Wells.

Al Smith was there waiting for us with his team all hitched up, and after getting a lunch from Sam Whittaker, we got on board the springless waggon on top of a load of freight, and rolled on over the unsafe bridge and up the Klihinah Flats. I was not sleepy any longer, and except for being a bit sore, none the worse for my night's journey.

I was filled with the delight of anticipating the surprise of the camp and the admiration of the men when Marian and I appeared on the steep trail going down into the canyon to the mine. It was a delight, too, to sit there in the waggon with her whom I loved. I held her hands, and kissed her often when Al wasn't looking. The youngster climbed about in constant danger of rolling off the load, till I took a stout cord

and tied him to a bale of hay so he could crawl around but could not fall off. We had peace then for a while till he grew tired and fell asleep, and we made a bed for him, where he slept the rest of the way, leaving Marian and me free to watch the subtle lights on the mountains and the smooth paths of the eagles through the blue sky.

It was five o'clock when we reached Porcupine, and after making a pack of the blankets for myself with a place for the baby on top, and a smaller pack for Marian, who insisted she could and ought to help, we set out up the trail by Cahoun Creek, because that was the safest way, though it was a bit longer. We went by easy stages, and I taught Marian how to climb the steep grades to the best advantage, and how to let gravity carry her on the down slopes while she rested for the next steep hill. We stopped often, and sitting down on the edge of the trail, looked over the beautiful canyon, the snow-capped mountain ranges with their craggy peaks, and the glaciers at the head of the river.

There was no one at Cahoun Creek, and we kept right on through the deep woods, where the shadows were already growing long, to the edge of the bench where the trail dipped down steeply to the mine five hundred feet below. The night shift was at work in the pit, and we could dimly hear above the muffled roar of the rushing river, the clang of the derrick, and the dull rattle of the boulders as they were being dumped out and rolled over the great heap. Some of the men were standing outside the cook-shack, and I thought they were the stockholders about to leave. I put my hands to my mouth like a megaphone, and let

out a yell, for this was my moment of triumph. It seemed impossible that they could have heard it above the din of the river, but one of them looked up and pointed; and then the whole gang came out of the bunkhouse, waved hands and arms, and slapped each other on the back. I took the baby in my arms, for the trail was dangerous, and, with Marian close behind, we descended the mountain to the camp.

There was general handshaking and congratulation. Mr. Ward said that he would take his hat off to my wife, but, as Marian told me later on with a twinkle, he kept it on even when he was in the cook-shack. He also wanted to give me the twenty-five dollars, which I refused; and in a half-hour we were setting the table for the night shift's lunch, and making ready for the breakfast meal.

Our tent was up in its place, and when darkness fell over the river our camp was made, the baby asleep in his own little cot in the corner, and we ourselves ready to sleep so the morning would find us fresh and eager to go to work.

Men like variety, and it was a pleasure to see the happy faces of the crew as they filed into the cook-shack the next morning, all clean-shaven and as excited as a bunch of boys on Christmas Day. In fact, I was the only unshaven one, when I ought to have been the best taken care of in the lot. But I had been so busy that I hadn't even given it a thought before. My beard was two weeks old. I looked like a tramp compared to the other men, and I was a little bit ashamed.

Marian excused me, however, for I had been up early, and after building a fire in the tent to heat water

for her, I had gone to the kitchen and made the fire there, starting the oatmeal cooking, mixing the hot-cake batter, cutting the bacon, and filling the coffee-pot with fresh water. By this time Marian had come across the bridge over the flume, and I hurried back over to the tent for Edmund. The bridge was two six-by-eight timbers with a cleat in each end to hold them together, and a frail handrail by which to steady oneself. To fall into the water swiftly rushing under it would be almost sure death, and it was no place for a woman to carry a child. When the eggs were spluttering in the pan and the gigantic piles of hot-cakes were ready, I had banged the gong for the second time, and the beauty show had lined up, with me taking last place.

As Marian had cooked for the road gang the year before, she knew what was expected, and how to go about her work. It was a joy to me to scent the aromas of the good dishes she was cooking for us as the breeze brought them down into the pit where we worked, though at the same time I realized that this was probably because she was my wife, and I was very much in love with her.

It was a happy camp after that. The stockholders went away; we worked only eight hours; we got the best wages in that part of the country; we had a good cook; and we were all friends. The work progressed rapidly. We all wanted to see what was on bedrock in that next pit, and we rolled boulders with a vengeance. It was not long before the higher ridges were uncovered. They were hard and smooth, and we found no gold on them. There were hardly any crevices, and only one small ledge of soft bedrock.

This was the one we had worked so profitably in the other pit, but which now tapered off and became hard like the rest of the river bottom. The slope in the bedrock was quite steep here, and had been washed and scoured by gravel and boulders, and as there was no soft rock for the heavy metals to bury themselves in, they had been carried over it to other places in which they could lodge themselves. There was only one real crevice in the pit, and that was a "fault" in the formation; and though we took a couple hundred dollars out of it, we could not get to the bottom of it, and so some of the gold was bound to escape us. I don't believe there was a bottom to the crack, for the deeper we dug the softer the dirt became, and we could smell sulphur fumes coming out of it. We gave it up, cleaned up what bedrock there was, and pushed the bedrock flume ahead again.

After this unfortunate pit, ill luck began to befall the camp. First the derrick broke down as we were pulling it ahead to its new position. Then when we turned the water into the new pit for the first time, we found that we had not weighted the new piece of flume sufficiently. It floated and broke loose the wing dams at its head, that kept the water from making other channels than through the flume. We had to tear it all apart to do it over again. After that was all finished the water slacked up in the pipe-line. Since I was the fastest man in the camp, I was sent to find out the trouble along the ditch that came a thousand feet down a gully in the mountain-side, and from there ran six miles along the side of Flower Mountain to its intake on Big Grizzly Creek. This was the old Porcupine high-line ditch, coming from

the only reliable all-year creek that flowed from that side of the glacier.

It is an ill wind that brings no good, and I had a delightful trip. The trail along the ditch was steep, almost precipitous in places, where I had to climb up the banks, holding on to the roots of trees or to bushes, with the ground loosening under my feet, and small avalanches of sand and gravel rushing down through the brush when by accident I dislodged some boulder that had been washed loose by the splash from the ditch. Up, up, through long glades between the alders ran the little waterway, among tall ferns growing in glorious profusion with blueberry-bushes, salmonberries, and cranberries.

I would have liked to have stopped to gorge on them, but I was in a hurry to find what had caused the water to cease coming, so I had only time to grab at them as I sped ahead, eating what luscious fruit I could get in that way. Up out of the alders, in through great willow thickets, and over wide grassy slopes the ditch led. Here were the flowers that had given the mountain its name. Daisies, violets, water-hyacinths, bluebells, columbines, wild pansies, poppies, lilies of the valley, forget-me-nots, and a hundred other kinds.

The air was sweet with their fragrance, and it was only with an effort that I kept on instead of stopping to gaze and smell, resting among them. How glad I should have been to have felt free to tarry in that paradise of flowers. Here were the homes of whistling marmots and gophers. Thousands of the little animals were everywhere in sight, sitting on their haunches like prairie-dogs, and by their shrill calls

announcing my approach to the legions behind them for miles along the mountain-side. Here, too, there were grouse by the hundred. Flock after flock I flushed by the ditch where they had gathered to feed along its banks. When I got farther along to where there were only huckleberries and moss sprinkled with white, blue, and pink daisies, and star-blossoms, I scared up several bunches of ptarmigan. Away on the other side of the river I saw a bear ambling along the mountain slope, even as I was ambling along on my side, and again, as it had a long time before when I was a criminal and fugitive from justice, there came over me a tremendous desire to be at one with Nature and the animals, instead of a human who had to slave under unnatural, uncomfortable conditions, seeking for his subsistence. Here was food in plenty: berries, meat, wild rice, and perhaps even the luscious grasses and flowers, for they looked eatable. Man was a fool indeed to have renounced his birthright to the freedom of Nature for the dirt and squalor of the cities. Then I thought of Marian, our son, and Viking's Cove. After all, we were living about as close to Nature as we could. Our home was in the woods and of the woods. I hurried on. My mission was not to meander along, feeding and glorying in the beauty of the earth: mine was to hurry up, see what was the matter with the ditch, repair it if I could, or hurry back to the camp for help.

Close to the side of a great snow-capped mountain the ditch ran along a bluff, and in through a gap in a side-hill. This gap was a narrow gorge between two round hills with steep sides covered entirely with soft moss. I could begin to hear the roar of

Big Grizzly Creek, and after a turn in the gap the gray-white, splashing, foaming glacier stream was in view. From far up in a lonely canyon where a glacier was lodged, this creek tumbled down over miles and miles of waterfalls and steep rapids—a turbulent spectacle here in the peace and sunshine.

Had the water been clear and sparklingly transparent, it would have been beautiful, but this was a glacier stream, contaminated from the outset by the glacier mud, and tearing its way through deep canyons with walls of blue clay, till it was so impregnated with the dull stuff that the very foam had a grayish hue on which the sun could not sparkle. Along the sides of the stream the foam gathered in the little dirty pools and lay in heaps like dirt-streaked waste from a factory dump. Here near the intake of the ditch the violent waters had broken through the side of the ditch, and had washed out a hole twenty feet long and eight feet deep. I turned off the water so that it would not make matters worse. Then because I could not fix that alone, I tightened my belt, pulled down my cap, and set out down the trail at a run. I would establish a record and get down by noon. Half-way down, however, I met Bob. He had started out soon after I had, thinking perhaps it was a two-man job. I told him what it looked like, and that I doubted if we could do it by ourselves in a day; and he said probably I was right, but he might as well take a look at it, anyway. So we turned back, and I was glad at that, for Bob had brought a lunch for both of us.

After he had taken the situation in, he said we might as well do what we could that day. We picked

all the rocks and boulders out of the bottom of the hole. Bob made a foundation for a dam; then he sent me up on the side of the hill, with an old shovel that had been cachéd up there against such an emergency, to cut sods of moss, which I threw down to him. He built a long, wide, concave dam of the dry sods, weighting each one down with a big rock. It was slow work at first, for the bottom had to be wide and solidly built, but soon I learned the knack of sod-cutting, and was able to send big square chunks down faster than he could use them, and the wall grew rapidly.

We ate our lunch and lay for a while on the warm, sun-baked side-hill, and I truly envied the whistling marmots that sat round about on little mounds in front of their holes watching us. It was delightful to lie in a hollow on the warm earth. We had not long to rest, however, for we could see that with an afternoon's work the dam would be complete.

When evening came the dam was ready, and the great hole that had been worn out by the action of the water had been filled up with sand and stones. We turned a little water in from the gate; it disappeared in the newly filled hole. We turned on a little more: the dam leaked, and I was for stopping the leaks, but Bob assured me that they would stop themselves as soon as the sods became soaked and swollen. We turned on the full head of water, and little by little the new dam ceased leaking. Our task was done.

We cachéd the shovel, and started back down the trail through the falling dusk. It grew dark, and then we had to go very slowly, for the path along

the ditch was hardly a trail, merely the easiest way to get along, and there were many obstructions to fall over. It was not long, however, till the full moon rose up over the mountains and flooded the world with its clear light. It was so beautiful that I should have stayed up there all night, had I not known that Marian would worry about me. When we reached the berry patches, we stopped and filled up, for we were very hungry. We ran on to a great bear in one of the berry thickets; but we made such a hullabaloo throwing sticks and stones that we scared him thoroughly, and for a long time we could hear him putting distance between us. Finally we got back down to the camp, where only the night shift was awake, and I made my way over to our camp, where my beloved slept sweetly and peacefully, and my son smiled in his dreams in his corner of the tent.

I began packing again at night when Marian got used to the work and did not need me in the evening. Our shift was from seven till four, then we had supper so the night shift could begin early, so I had plenty of time to make a trip before it grew dark. But one night when the camp was short of both milk and meat, I went down and brought up over a hundred pounds. Marian had had some extra work, so I helped her with the dishes first, and got a late start. Then I hurried back with my heavy load without resting, for I did not want to go down that steep switchback trail with more than a hundred pounds on my back in the dark. This was too much for me, and I lay awake again most of the night. Marian became frightened, scolded me thoroughly, spoke to

Bob about it, and the end of it was that I was not allowed to pack any more after working hours.

We had a remarkably dry fall that year. August and September went by with hardly more than a sprinkle of rain once or twice. Water was getting low in the Porcupine, and Bob was beginning to worry about not getting water enough to work to the end of the season, which should be some time in the latter part of October. He was afraid the frost would come before the fall rains, and that there would be snow, which would spoil everything. The lowering of the water delayed our work in the new pit, too, for we had to use the giant oftener and longer at a time to get rid of the sand and gravel that the natural flow from the spillway was not able to carry with it. We all prayed for rain, and we got it. It began one morning with a sprinkle, and it increased all day long, till by evening it was pouring down in torrents. The river rose, inch by inch, foot by foot, and the water in the big flume increased proportionately. The new pit was down to where the higher spots of bedrock showed, and it looked very promising, with a wide ledge of soft bedrock running straight across the channel. Several pieces of gold had been found, and Bob did not want to turn the water through the spillway, for the pit would fill up again if he did. So the big flume had to carry the burden of the whole river. Marian and I lay in our tent, close beside it, and listened to the water roaring through the long wooden structure. Boulders began running through: first one, then two or three, till soon there was a constant rumble as of legions of horsemen galloping over a bridge. We could not

sleep, for we had a sense of impending disaster as we lay there huddled together, alert to the terrible roar of the river. Time after time I looked out at the water in the flume, and each time I looked it had risen higher. We were on the opposite side from the camp, and we did not want to be cut off from the rest of the men. I had almost decided to move across to the other side, when water began splashing over the side of the flume, and a little stream came running over the floor. We waited no longer. I rolled the baby up in a bundle, while Marian hastily slipped some clothes on. Then we went out into the rainy night. The water was splashing over the bridge, too, and rushing under it with incredible speed, but we crossed safely. Then we found that streams were pouring over the edge of the flume, so that we could hardly follow the walk by the side, but must wade knee-deep through the creek-bed to reach the bunk-house. The men were all there dressed and ready for an emergency. I put Edmund in one of the bunks, and while Marian went to the cook-shack to make coffee for the men, I went across the flume in spite of her protestations to get our blankets, clothes, and mattress. I was afraid, too, that the flume would break on that side, and the river would sweep away our little belongings. It took two trips to get all the things across, and the last time the water was so high that I got wet from top to toe crossing the flume and the rushing creek that had formed beween the flume and the bunkhouse.

The rain came down unceasingly. The water began to dig over towards the cook-shack, so we all gathered in the bunkhouse. We heard a muffled, grinding

roar from up the river. It was a landslide. We rushed to the windows and the door, and saw the river rise over a foot in one moment. It came over the side of the flume now in a constant roaring cascade. A great tree came floating down; its roots caught over the edge of the flume right in front of the bunkhouse, where it hung while the water shot up twenty feet into the air over it. Bob went down to see how things looked by the pit, and I was stationed on the dam by the sawmill to wave a lantern over my head if the flume should show signs of breaking. He came back in a hurry, saying that the flume had broken right by the pit, and that the derrick was gone and all the bedrock flume filled in. He sent me up to the head of the pipe-line to turn off the water, and with the rest of the men he went down to try to save the gates, which were the most valuable parts of the pipe.

While they were down there the flume broke in front of the cookhouse, and the men barely escaped from the vicious muck-laden torrent that swept down on them. A pile of logs from above the dam came tearing through the gap in the flume and lodged against the cook-shack. They stayed there, forming a sort of wing dam protecting the foundations, and it looked for a while as if the cook-shack would be saved. We decided, however, that we had better pack the supplies that were stored there up on the bank. Meanwhile the rain kept falling in torrents, landslides came down the mountains all around us with terrible thunders that made us look at one another, wondering if our part of the mountain would slide down too, and grind us to atoms.

Then the cook-shack went. The stream had cut under it, and it toppled over into the rushing waters, that shot high over it, turned it over and over, crushed it, and tore it away out of sight. The logs that had formed the chance wing dam went with it, and the resistless current began working its way towards the bunkhouse. It had not had enough—gluttonous, it reached for more, and ate its way under crumbling banks toward our shelter. We heard another landslide, larger than the rest and quite close to the camp. The water in the river sank, and Jack yelled for the men to save what they could and get out of the canyon. The river was clogged above, and when she broke through there was no telling what might happen. Everybody who had not already done so rolled his blankets, and we began to evacuate. We were no more than in time. I had not carried the baby, who was rolled in a bundle, more than a hundred feet or so up the trail when the water rose with a sudden swirl and a rush. Piles of brush, great boulders, and trees came surging, tearing, banging through the gap in the flume and were flung over at the little house as if in terrible anger. A large spruce came down and lodged itself across the intake of the flume. Brush immediately piled up against it, forming a dam, and the water above the man-made dam rose foot by foot till in a hundred-foot-wide cascade the river flowed over the whole length of it, taking the lumber piles, the extra pipe, the blacksmith's shop, and the sawmill along with it. Everything was crushed in, broken up, and carried away. The water had been diverted from the bunkhouse, however, and though it sagged at one corner, it looked as if it might be saved after all. Most

of us felt that the canyon was no place to stay in any longer, so we started up the trail with our belongings. I took the baby first, following Marian, who felt her way on hands and knees where the trail was very steep, for though there was a man ahead with a lantern, its puny light was worse than no light at all on that switchback trail. Fat had not rolled his blankets. He was young and apt to be in a hurry at the last moment. He had just picked up all his belongings in his arms and carried them that way. He had the whooping-cough, too, and for a long time afterward we talked of the way he had walked steadily up that trail, barking at every step, leaving a trail of socks, towels, gloves, and shirts, all the way from the bunkhouse to the grove of trees on the top, and wondering how instead of the pack getting heavier, which is usually the rule, his had become lighter and lighter.

There on the high bench in a hollow stood a six-by-eight tent that Bob had used when he was repairing the ditch up there, and that was the nearest shelter we had. The baby slept through it all, and, wrapped soft and warm in his woollen blankets and canvas, he was not at all conscious of the dangers he had gone through. After seeing Marian and him established in the tent, I went back down the trail for our blanket-roll, which had been left on the bank above the bunkhouse. When I was down there I saw the last of the camp go before the fury of the swollen stream. The torrent had dug a channel around the corner of the dam, and came in ever-increasing volume over the hole where the sawmill had stood, burrowing its way under the bunkhouse. As I stood on the bank the house sagged at one corner, turned over on

its side, and, gripped by the stream, was torn away out of sight. Man had harnessed the river, but the river had conquered. There was nothing left now; and Bob and I, who were the last to leave the scene that night, climbed the trail to the tent on the bench, where the rest of the crew and Marian sat crowded like herring in a barrel, listening to the musical rattle and scrape of Bob's little old Edison.

At last the day broke, and we set out for Porcupine, walking slowly along the trail, each packing his belongings on his back. Last of them all was I, carrying my son in a sling on my back, following Marian. Though she was wet and her clothes were muddy, hanging on her like dirty rags, her hair straying in occasional wet strands from under the rain-hat she wore, her face was fresh and pink. I marvelled at her strength and endurance. She was not used to this sort of thing. She was not sinew and muscle like the rest of us, and yet she had worked all day before, had had but little rest and no food during the terrible night, and was now the freshest-looking of the lot. I knew then what I had unconsciously meant when I said that she had, hidden within her, great untouched stores of vitality, when I had first met her and fallen in love with her. I had loved her then, but I loved her more now as I carried her healthy child on my back, and watched her swinging easily along the rough trail, gloriously emancipated woman that she was, in overalls and heavy-soled boots. She did not grumble like the rest of us, for it was adventure to her and wine to her spirit. She was not exhausted, for her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled blue. This was the kind of adventu

hat women were but seldom allowed, and she realized t and was thrilled to the full.

When the head of the weary caravan reached the ridge across the Porcupine by the old flume, word ame back to us from mouth to mouth that the bridge as gone. We had to turn back and climb up over the mountain that rose between us and Porcupine, straight up from the river, in places allowing no passing at the foot. There was no trail to follow now, and slowly we worked our way up over rockslides, where a miss-step meant certain death in the river below; through thorny thickets of devil clubs; over long, steep slopes, where the first man kicked footholds in the sod and the rest of us stepped in them, slowly creeping along, past perpendicular cliffs, where we had to hang on to the face of the mountain to keep from falling over the precipices, where I was in a constant agony for fear Marian's nerve would fail her. But she was brave under the strain of it all, and only cried once, a little bit, when she fell in a thorny tangle that scratched her face and stuck her hands full of stickers. I cursed myself then for bringing her up here. It cut me to the quick to see her hurt; and when she smiled to me through her tears, I could have fallen down and worshipped her for it.

We had not brought any food along, for we had not expected to be on the way more than an hour or two, and we grew mighty hungry before we reached the top of the divide from which we could go straight down to Porcupine. It was true that we had had scenery on this trip—yes, great, desolate, wet scenery, pouring rain that almost hid the mountains; dripping trees and brush that showered on us when we touched

them; torrents of muddy rain-water tumbling down from each canyon and gully; and, above all, there was rain, rain, rain, and we were wet, hungry, and cold.

The little baby on my back was awake part of the time, but he did not cry for food. He knew that there was something wrong with the world, or food would have been given to him. He lay still as a mouse in the pack, smiling to us when I laid him on the ground and opened the pack to see if he was all right. Sometimes when the line stopped to take a rest, some of the men came back to see how Marian and the child were getting along, and each time they marvelled at the colour and freshness of her, and the smiles that Edmund had for them when we laid back the loose flap of canvas that kept the rain off the little fellow's head.

"That little fellow! He never cries. I never saw a baby like that before," we heard Syl, a Swiss, tell the other men as he walked back to his place in the line; and our hearts swelled with pride and happiness, the climb was made lighter, and our hunger less acute.

When we reached Porcupine we found Dan McGrew, Al Smith, Charley Hanley, Hugh McDonald, Bert Taylor, and Scotty Jennings, the regular residents of the old town, all there. Among them they took care of us, fed us, and let us dry our clothes and blankets by their fires. Al Smith gave Marian and me a little log-cabin next door to his house. We could use his wood, he said, and anything else that we wanted.

"Just go right in if I'm not there, and help your-

self to anything you want," he said, and our hearts warmed to the good old man. At the store we bought grub, for the bridge on the waggon-road had gone out, and it could not be repaired until the water was lower. So we prepared to camp in the little cabin indefinitely.

HOME AGAIN

CHAPTER XIII

HOME AGAIN

I WENT back over the mountain with Bob the next day to get our blankets, which we had left in the little tent, and to take a look at the camp by daylight. With food in our stomachs the trail was not so difficult as it had seemed the day before, and we made it up to the mine in half the time. The flooded canyon, with bits of wreckage strewn here and there, was a most distressing sight; but, wonder of wonders, our tent still stood on the other side of the river, looking as if nothing had happened. There was nothing we could do, so we went back up to the tent, rolled what stuff we had to carry, and once more went down to Porcupine.

Emil, the timekeeper, paid us off; and as soon as the river went down enough, so that it could be forded on the gravel bars, most of the men left for Haines with their blanket-rolls on their backs. Marian and I waited, however, for I could not pack the youngster and the blankets too, and we were in no hurry.

When the sun had shone for several days, and the river had gone down to normal again, Hugh McDonald gathered about him all the men he could find in Porcupine, engaged Al Smith's team, and in two days there was again a waggon-bridge across the Porcupine, and Al announced that he would break it in by going to Wells the next day. We packed our things, scrubbed out our cabin, so that it would be

shipshape for the next wayfarer, and when in the early morning Al whooped outside, we were all ready for the next stage of our journey.

At Wells we learned that landslides had blocked the road to Haines, so that no vehicle could be expected up. The only thing left was for us to go by canoe, so Al Smith took us to Kluck Wan, where we unloaded ourselves, bag and baggage, and set about finding an Indian who would take us down the river. There were not many bucks around, for fishing was still in full swing. At one great frame-house I raised an old fellow, who asked me very gruffly what I wanted. He was a prosperous Indian, I am sure, for he had an air of condescending aloofness about him, and he wore a heavy nugget chain, that must have been worth several hundred dollars.

"What you want?" he asked.

"Can you take me down to Haines in your canoe?"

"Yes. How many people you are?"

"Just two. My wife and I, and a little baby."

"How much you pay?"

I paused deliberatively. "Five dollars."

He laughed in derision. "You pay me forty dollars. I take you down in my war canoe."

"You don't want to take me down," I laughed back at him, and went on.

I went to several others, offering as much as ten dollars for the trip, but they shook their heads. They had made a lot of money fishing, and all of them had nets out in the river. They were too prosperous. Finally, when I was getting desperate, I came across one who, so I was told, had lost his net in the flood, and was going down-river that day to look for it.

"How much you want to take us down to Haines?" I asked.

He was a big burly brute with one white eye, thick lips, and protruding teeth. Looking suspiciously at me, he asked me how much I wanted to give him.

"Ten dollars," I said. "If you won't take me down for that I'll walk, and to the devil with you!"

That helped. He stood as if undecided for a moment, looking at me. He could see that I was able to walk. "All right," he said; "I take you." He ran into his cabin. Then we went together to the brink of the river. On the way I picked up our huge pack of blankets, and called Marian, who was talking to a bunch of little Indian children that had gathered to see the white baby.

When the Indian saw my pack, my wife, and my child he knew immediately that I could not very well walk, and he protested violently. Ten dollars was not enough; twenty dollars.

"You told me you would take me for ten dollars," I said. "I know you are going down the river, anyway. Ten dollars is big pay."

"My canoe too little. I don't know you have so many people. You give me more money."

I wrangled with him for a while, but I soon saw the futility of it. He had me bested. It would cost me a good deal to stay at the road-house with my family, and the school-teacher and missionary were both away. We had no outfit to camp with. The Indian knew all this, and he knew he would get his price in the end. I had one happy thought, however. "I'll give you fifteen dollars to take me to Jones's Point," I said. "If you don't want that, I'll

go to Sam Whittaker, I'll buy his canoe, and go down the river myself. I've been up and down this river many times. I know the way."

He looked uneasy, then began to shake his head.

"All right," I said, picking up the pack. "Come on, Marian; we'll go back to Wells."

"All right, all right," he said hastily, for fifteen dollars was not to be sneezed at. "I take you."

I took the pack over and placed it in the bottom of the canoe, that lay moored by the bank of the river. I helped Marian in, and our young son, who was delighted by the varied life we were leading. Then I stepped into the bow and took a paddle. The Indian got in and pushed the long dugout off, and soon we were out in the swiftly flowing stream. The banks flew past us as the Indian and I drove the light craft along. The high water in the Chilkat had not yet subsided; the river ran swiftly, and soon we were out of sight of the village. We came to a place where a dozen channels branched out through a wide gravel-strewn flat. I would never have known which one of those channels to follow, but the Indian did not know that, or I would have had to have paid him his twenty dollars. He steered the canoe from behind, and when I was undecided about a turn, I ceased paddling till I saw which way he wanted to go. There were places where the water was shallow, and the bottom of the canoe grated on the gravel. The Indian and I would then jump out, and pull the canoe along till we got in deeper water again. Then I would hop in, and he would nod his head approvingly at my skill in getting in and out. My boyhood years by the Sound, my years

at sea, and my fishing and canoeing in Alaska, had made me as handy in a canoe as the Indian himself.

For a long time Marian had wanted to make this trip down-river by canoe. The excitement when sharp turns had to be made; when the bottom of the shell we were in struck gravel; when we raced through deep-cut, narrow channels where the banks caved in constantly, splashing water in our faces; when salmon, disturbed by our presence, swam hurriedly away and flapped on their sides over the shallow gravel bars, or leaped suddenly out of the deep water beside the boat, falling back in with a splash and a swirl—each was a thrill and a joy to her.

The young Viking crawled around in the bottom of the canoe, for he was so light that his weight did not matter in balancing that tippy craft. He kept Marian in constant fear that he would fall overboard, by leaning over the side to let his little pink hands trail in the water. He showed true Viking blood, for though he was lightly clad he was warm and happy in the boat, and screamed with delight when the salmon leaped out or went splashing over the shallows.

When we reached the five-mile turn in the river, I saw that the tide was out, and that my Indian could not get us to Jones's Point without a lot of trouble. "You put us ashore at the four-mile post," I said, "and we will call it twelve and a half."

He nodded assent, and steered the little craft through a series of small narrow channels that all formed a deep, wide, slow-running stream, flowing close to the side of the road by the four-mile post.

Here we landed. I paid the Indian, and laughed at him when he tried to hold me up for the whole fifteen dollars. If he wanted to take me to Jones's Point, I said, three miles farther south, I would be glad to pay him two dollars and a half more. But he was satisfied, for he had made twelve dollars and a half in two hours. He only wanted all he could get. That was his way.

Where we landed by the four-mile post a regular village had sprung up. While we waited for an auto-stage that trafficked back and forth between the village and Haines, we learned that an appeal had been made to the United States Government to allow the Indians to fish in the river that year. The fishing season had been poor, the cannerymen had claimed; and if the Indians were not allowed to fish in the river, they would starve in the coming winter. As a consequence three canneries had established depôts at the four-mile post. Here the natives sold the fish they took off the spawning-grounds. Red salmon sold for forty cents—the highest they had ever been—and the red-salmon streams were being combed clean by natives and white men from all over South-Eastern Alaska. From the depôt they were being hauled over the road to the dock at Haines, and from there they were shipped by boat to canneries as far away as Douglas, just across the channel from Juneau. Haines was busy too. All sorts of people were coming in on the strength of the money that was being made. Every team in town was busy hauling fish; every auto was hurrying to and from the four-mile post, carrying the prosperous Indians, who were making as high as a hundred dollars a day.

It is safe for me to say that none of the run of late red fish reached the spawning-grounds, for the few that made it through the many nets that barred the way were picked up by Indians with hook and canoe on the very shallows of the spawning-grounds themselves.

One Indian I talked to shook his head sadly. "Too bad. Kill all fish. Pretty soon, poor Indian he starve." He had made fifty-seven dollars that morning on the tide, and had all kinds of money; but he was not happy, for he knew that the fish, which had been the living of his people for generations untold, were being systematically exterminated. The rest of the natives felt the same way about it, but the canneries said "Fish," and everybody was fishing.

I spoke to one of the cannery men who was established in a great tent on the very edge of the river where salmon were pitched in one end from the river and out the other end into the waggons. I asked him if he thought it advisable to fish in the river, and he shook his head emphatically; but what was he to do? The Government had permitted it; the other canneries were doing it; the price of salmon was shooting up on account of the food shortage in Europe, until dog salmon were selling for more than red salmon were a few years ago. He could not sit by and let the other fellows do all the looting. I asked him about the starving Indians, and he laughed in scorn. That was all a "put-up spiel," he told me. Though this season had not been as profitable as other seasons had been, the Indians had plenty to live on here. Most of them had much more

money than the white men. There was no danger of their starving.

So the Government had been fooled; the river was being stripped of its fish; and though there were paid fish commissioners on the very ground all the time who ought to have been able to see the flagrant injustice to the country and to the natives themselves, nothing was being done about it.

In Haines I cashed my cheque, collected the money from the crop of potatoes that my neighbour had harvested and disposed of for me, and paid the remaining debts to the stores. When I was through, Marian and I had five hundred dollars clear, and a cow and a calf. We could easily live all winter on that, and have something to start the next year. At last we had the free start that we had tried so hard to get. We could go to work at our leisure, so we began planning what we would do. We would enjoy staying at Viking's Cove over winter, trapping, reading, studying, and working on the book; but our son, young Edmund, was a most remarkably healthy and finely shaped child, and we wanted to show him to his grandparents. We were very proud of him, and the dear folks wanted to see him and us too. Marian had been away from them for more than two years; her sister and brother were growing up, and she did not want to get out of touch with them. We might never have the chance to go south again if we failed to take this one. Besides, we were young and strong. We could surely work down there and make expenses. It was very tempting.

We decided to stay at Viking's Cove till the book of my adventures was completed. Then we would

spend the rest of the winter in California. We bought the supplies we needed for a two-months stay, got a gas-boat to take us down, and were soon established in our log-house by the lake.

The leaves of birch and willow had fallen, and lay like a golden carpet in the bottom of the woods; the alders were brown, and the ferns lay withered where before they had been waist-deep, alive and green. The tops of the spruce-trees were loaded with cones, and the squirrels were busily engaged in nipping them off, throwing them down and packing them away to their storerooms at the roots of the great trees. We, too, set to work making ready for the winter. I put the root-house in shape, gathered the turnips, carrots, and parsnips that grew in the garden around the house, and stored them away. We went berry-picking in the woods across the lake, where the leaves had fallen off the blueberry-bushes, which made them much easier to gather, and in the swamp, where moss cranberries, high-bush cranberries, and huckleberries were still to be found in astonishing abundance. Marian made pies — blueberry pies, huckleberry and moss cranberry pies, and huckleberry and lingen pies, that were the best things that I had ever eaten. There were thousands of trout in the lake, and we had fish as often as we cared to. Ducks on their way south often made the lake a landing-place. Almost every morning found a flock of them there—big fat mallards, canvasbacks, teals, and other kinds that we knew no names for. Roast duck larded with bacon, and stuffed with prunes and apples, was a common dish on our table.

One morning early, before daylight, I woke up

hearing a flock of geese squawking as they flew around the lake. They stopped their racket, and I knew they must have settled, or they would have kept up the noise; so I slipped into my clothes, took my shotgun and a few shells loaded with buckshot, and slipped out as quietly as I could. I knew they were down in the shallow part of the lake, farthest away from the cabin, so I made a circle around in the woods to sneak up on them from the opposite side. There was a half-moon high in the sky, making it light enough to get through the brush without stepping on dead limbs that would break and make a noise.

When I came near the lake again, I crawled on hands and knees very slowly, for I had to go through part of the swamp where there was no shelter. I could hear them splashing in the lake, one of them occasionally flapping its wings, and a constant quacking murmur. They were feeding on the swamp-grass that grew in the shallows. I dared not look up, for I knew there was a sentinel on some high place on the brink of the lake, and I wanted to get as close as possible before he saw me and gave the alarm. I crawled on my belly, inch by inch, foot by foot. Once when I looked ahead I saw their watcher on the brink of the lake. I moved along to where there was a bush between us. It was a bit out of my way, but I could not afford to be seen. To kill the sentinel would have been easy enough; but I knew that he was very old and tough, and it was a young one I wanted. I took my time crawling along towards the brink of the lake. It was getting brighter in the sky, for day was breaking.

hat was well, for I should be able to shoot better. was quite close, less than thirty feet from the ntinel. I dared hardly breathe, and my heart beat loudly that I was afraid he would hear it. He ard something, for several times he stretched his ng neck and looked around from side to side. I d come to a place where I had to crawl out in in sight of him to get nearer the lake. I was near ough to shoot, but the bank of the lake was so high re that I could not see the geese unless I stood up in in sight of the sentinel. The day was growing hter, and I had to do something soon. I lay still second or two, then just as I had decided to rise d shoot at the first goose, I heard the watcher ter a loud squawk, and he flew straight up. There s a thud of feet on the ground and loud yawl from e lynx which had missed its prey. The flock of ese rose from the lake with tremendous commo- n. I had almost forgotten to shoot, but at that jumped up, threw my gun to my shoulder, banging way at a goose that came right over me. It fell raight down with a thump. I reloaded and looked r the lynx. It was racing away through the swamp, o swift in the uncertain light to shoot at. The ese flew squawking away through the sky to the uth, and I proudly carried my game home. It a a young one, quite small but very fat, and it ade several delicious meals.

We could have lived completely off the country that l, so plentiful was the game. There were grouse erywhere in the woods, and when the rabbits rned white before the snow came, I could go out y time and get one inside of fifteen minutes.

We had brought the cow and the calf home as soon as we came down, and we surely feasted like kings on fresh milk, cream, butter, cottage cheese, berries, mushrooms, fish, and game. We worked every day on the book. It was better than we had remembered it, but it required a tremendous lot of going over. We worked it over, Marian and I, sentence by sentence, softening, straightening, rearranging, not changing the story, but trying to put it so that it would best be understood. We took turns dictating and typing, and it was slow work, for both of us were very poor on the typewriter.

October rolled by with storms from the south that whipped the lake to foam and stripped the remaining leaves from the forest. Then came snow and frost, and more rain, and more frost. The lake froze over one calm night after a heavy rain-storm that had melted the snow everywhere. It was slick as a mirror and several inches thick, for the thermometer had dropped to zero. After making some calculations with the calendar, for the days of the week are alike in the wood, Marian discovered that it was Friday, and suggested that I should hurry to town to invite our young friends out for a skating party for Saturday. It was a great idea, and I ran all the way to town that afternoon, and the next morning came back with a gas-boat load of young people from Haines.

Never before had Odin's Lake witnessed such a spectacle. All day long we played on the ice, shouting, singing, and laughing. At noon we had a great feast of baked salmon, potatoes, and blueberry pies. Then we all pitched in, cleared away the dishes,

and made for the lake again. We built great bonfires on its brink, and roasted ourselves by their scorching heat when our limbs had wearied of the play.

After supper we went out to the bonfires again. The north lights began their play in the sky, sending long, fan-like bars like great searchlights shooting across, or rising like a wide, quivering, flickering flame that covered the whole sky, mounting, mounting, till the whole was a tremulous canopy; then subsiding and dying away, only to appear again and again in ever more fantastic shapes. We sang songs and told stories till late in the evening, when the Indian who had brought the guests came up from the beach to say that he was afraid the north wind would blow soon. The young people gathered up their belongings, and went laughing and singing down the trail to the beach, and soon after we could hear through the still night the gasboat putt-putting its way towards Haines.

Marian and I stood hand in hand by the doorway listening to their departure. She sighed. "Svend, did you ever see such complexions?"

"It's the north," I said, "the struggle with the elements and the change of the seasons, that make them so healthy and vigorous. Those children who were here to-night, Marian, are the ancestors of a super-nation. They will be the fathers and mothers of a people as strong and virile as the people of the old Northland, with the splendid ancestry from the fusion of the strong men and women of all the nations of Europe, that has made America."

"I believe you are right, Svend. It's up to us to see to it that our young Edmund becomes the

right sort of an ancestor. Not an over-civilized one, with jangled nerves and dyspepsia."

We went in and closed the door. The big heater in the centre of the living-room glowed red on the sides. It was comfortable to sit there after having been out in the cold night. We looked around the cosy room, its birchbark-covered walls, its crude shelves laden with books and papers, its typewriter table with another convenient litter of paper, the big table with the brown Chinese bowl filled with red and gold autumn sprays, the broad couch with its cheerful woven cover and its heap of bright pillows; our home was crude, but it was convenient and comfortable, for we had made it to suit our needs.

Marian laughed a little uncertainly. "Aside from our other riches, Svend, we have two arm-chairs. How can we leave it all!"

"We'll not leave it for long, Marian. Early spring will find us here again in this same dear room."

We climbed the stairs for a last look at the young Viking. He was an early-to-bedder, and an early riser too, and he enforced his habits on the rest of us. He had had a strenuous day out of doors, and when supper was over he had been glad to go to sleep, and would now be rested long before we were.

Quiet reigned once more by Odin's Lake. The bonfires dwindled to heaps of coals, the owls flew swiftly through the forest, and peace reigned till morning, when young Edmund came tumbling into our bed, wriggling, jumping, and laughing. There was no more chance to sleep that day for us.

Another week finished the book, and we sent it off to Chicago friends who had promised to read it and send it on to the publishers if they thought it had a chance. We had done our part. Now the rest lay with Fate. We hardly expected that this first book should be thought fit to print. We wondered if it were reasonable to hope that it would come back with instructions to write it over and do it better. Still, we hoped for the best, and planned the many things we would do if we did get it published.

After the book was off our hands we did not work at all, for we had only ten days to remain in Alaska, and we wanted to enjoy them to the fullest extent. We walked through the woods when the snow allowed, or sat by the fire reading aloud, or discussed the chances of the book, and built great air castles about the life we would lead when I became a great writer. It was a favourite subject of conversation, and every day I found some new reason to believe that my book would be accepted and published, until I became quite convinced that this would come to pass, while Marian, being more conservative and fearing lest my fall from hope would be too hard, began to think of reasons why it would not be, so we never lacked a subject for interesting, and sometimes violent, controversy.

Thus the days passed swiftly, and the time soon came when we had to close up our house and go into town to be ready to leave on the boat. I took the cattle into town first and sold them, for the expense of keeping them over winter would be more than they were worth. Then I went back and brought our luggage in on a Yukon sled with dogs,

for snow had fallen again, and formed a crust, making good sledding. Then I went back the third time, for Marian and my son. We put all our food away in a big iron can. Then I wrote a note to all comers, telling them that the back door was unlatched, that there was grub in the iron can, that they were welcome to help themselves if they would put the lid back on the can when they were through. This note I nailed to the door.

We said good-bye then to the cabin and the lake, the woods and the mountains, and Marian's eyes were moist, for the place had grown very dear to us. But the dogs were eager to be off, and soon we were going at a gallop through the woods to Flat Bay, across the peninsula to Litnikoff Bay, down the new road to the creek, over the hill to Joe Carr's Cove, and through the woods again to Fort Seward and Haines, where the boat was due the very next day.

A TRIP SOUTH

CHAPTER XIV

A TRIP SOUTH

People in Haines shook their heads dubiously when they heard that we were going south for the rest of the winter. Some of my friends considered it unwise. I ought to use the money we had saved to improve my homestead. Had I not been in debt most of the time since I had been married? Had I not been so poor that we had hardly had enough to eat part of the time? And had I been able to buy a new suit of clothes for three years? What right had I to take my family south for the winter like a millionaire? In a little town like Haines everybody knows his neighbour's financial status, and discusses his affairs as if they were matters of deepest concern. They all knew that I had written a book and started it on its outward journey; but though many of them respected me and were true friends, they did not feel that it was reasonable that I, who was one of themselves, should be able to write a book which others would want to read.

They shook their heads in doubt as to the wisdom of the whole affair. I would do better if I concentrated on my ranch instead of travelling round squandering my hard-earned money. I might not be able to get north again when spring came, and even if I came back I would be sure to be broke and have

to go into debt again. And this time it would be my own fault. Rumour also had it that we were leaving the country for good, and when I went from store to store that last evening asking if there were any bills against me, each one in turn asked me if I figured on coming back; and to each one I answered yes, that we would be back before the snow had gone.

At the last minute two of the McRae children decided to go with us. They were both born in Alaska, and had lived there all their lives, so we felt that conducting them on their first journey outside was a pleasure and a responsibility. There were five of us in the little group which took the boat that stormy day—three native-born Alaskans, Marian, and I. Everything was gray, desolate, and cold-looking in the evening dusk when the boat had finally unloaded all the freight and whistled good-bye to the town. There was no one on the dock to wave farewell to us except the wharfinger and the Indian longshoremen, for it was too cold and disagreeable for anyone to hang around the dock, and we had long since said good-bye to those we were leaving behind. Marian and Frances went down into the saloon, where there was warmth and cushioned chairs, but Buster and I stayed on deck in the cold and storm watching the dock, the town, and the beaches disappearing in the deepening dusk and the thickening snow. Arm-in-arm, we walked up and down in the wind and cold, for we were loath to let go of the north that we knew and loved. Often I had sworn at the snow and cursed the country, but now when I was going away from it all, I wanted to take as much of it away

with me as I could. I loved the snow that blew in my face, and the sting of the cold as it bit my cheeks and nose.

We made good connections all the way through, and in less than eight days from the start at Haines we were at the station in the little Californian town waiting for a car to take us to the home of Marian's parents, the home from which I had taken her almost three years before. How excited I had been that first time I had got off at this little station, telephoning to her home that I had arrived, only to turn around and find her looking at me from across the street!

At first we had been like awkward strangers, for we had known each other but little. But soon we had grown more at ease. I thought of the first time I had taken her in my arms and held her close to me. The memory of it was fresh and sweet. How well we had come to know each other since in these three years of intimate association! Did I love her less now that I knew her every whim even as I knew myself? No. I loved her a thousand times more. Then I had been in love with a dream; now I was in love with a woman who had been my sole companion for three years, a woman in whom the things that we call charming in a girl had not diminished, but had grown more complete, more a part of her wonderful self, from the joyous, healthy life that we had lived together. I loved her, too, because she was mother to the wee Viking lad who stood between us, wondering at the strange sights and sounds on this his first journey to the southland.

My heart beat fast as we approached her home,

where I should give her back to the arms of the parents from whom I had taken her. With tears of joy her dear mother exclaimed over the youth and freshness that seemed to emanate from Marian. It was as if she had absorbed bodily the spirit of the north, and the love and joy that had been ours.

Her mother took my hands in hers. "After all those storms and debts, I expected her to look years older, but she is more beautiful than ever. My dear good son!"

After a week of visiting I grew restless. It was hard for me to loll around in the sunshine, eating and growing lazy. The heat in this southern town was too much for my northern blood; and during the first few days I suffered real discomfort, though Marian and young Edmund did not mind it at all.

We were waiting every day to hear about the book, but no word came. In my imaginative vanity I had expected the manuscript to be rushed through the hands of my friends to the publishers to be published right away, so of course there was a reaction coming to me as to everyone who lets his imagination and his vanity run away with his reason. A week went by, and a postal receipt came, saying that the manuscript had been received in Chicago. It had been out of our hands over three weeks. I waited another week, expecting every mail to bring me the wonderful news that I hoped for, but no word came. I grew so worried and impatient that I decided that I would have to go to work to forget my anxiety. I started out one morning looking for a job. After making a round of the employment offices in Los Angeles and finding nothing interesting there, I went

to San Pedro, where I had landed in the United States ten years before. I crossed the harbour to Terminal Island, where I had worked as longshoreman, and found that a great change had taken place.

Where ten years before there had been only sandy beaches, there were now docks, canneries, and a big shipyard. On approaching it I found a crowd of men around the door of the employment office. I stood by for a while speculating on how to go about getting a job where there was so much competition. I had long wished to work in a shipyard; but now when I stood at the gate of one, I feared that I had no chance with so many other men looking for work. They were doubtless all experienced men. Still, I decided to wait around to see what would happen. The men looked as if they were expecting something. Presently the door to the office opened, and a tall, stout man appeared holding a paper in his hand.

"Are there any asbestos workers here?" he called, and several men stuck up their hands and elbowed their way through the crowd to the door. He let them in one by one, scanning their faces and asking something which I could not hear.

"I want two holder-ons," and a half-dozen began to fight their way to the door. He let two of them in. I was not an asbestos worker, and I had no idea what a holder-on might be; so any faint hope I might have had of getting work there disappeared. Besides, I could not very well jump in among that crowd elbowing and pushing to get to the door. My situation was not desperate enough for that.

"Are there any slab helpers?" the man called.

Several answered and came forward. The first one was a young fellow, slight and pale of face.

"What can you do on the slab?" the employment officer asked contemptuously.

"I can try," the young fellow nervously insisted, and I felt sorry for him, for he looked as if he needed a job very badly.

"Did you ever work on the slab?"

"No, but I've worked in a blacksmith's shop, and I can use a hammer."

"No use. You're too light." He was waved aside, and an old man stepped up.

"What can you do on a slab?"

"Well, I reckon I can work as hard as anyone."

"No use, dad." The employment officer shook his head. "You're too old. You wouldn't last a day. I want two young husky men for the slab—men who can use a hammer, and who can stand to be fried alive."

Several held up their arms and worked toward him, but he rejected all of them except a big Mexican who claimed to be an expert slab hand. Then he let his eyes rove over the crowd till they lit on me standing apart from the rest. "What's the matter with you?" he called to me. "Come here."

I did not like his tone, but since that was probably part of getting a job, I pushed my way through the crowd to where he stood.

"Did you ever work on the slab?"

"No."

"Ever work in a shipyard at all?"

"No."

"Can you use a hammer?"

"Yes."

"Do you think you could swing a thirty-two pound hammer?"

"If the rest of them can, I guess I can too. I can try, anyway."

"Can you stand a lot of heat? To be fried alive a dozen times a day?"

"Well, I don't know about that, but I'm out for a job, and I'm willing to try anything."

He felt of my arms and shoulder, and asked me to knot my muscles. "Jesus!" he said with a laugh; "you'll do," and pushed me inside, where another man glared at me through a wicket and asked me if I had ever worked in this yard before. When I said no, he handed me a questionnaire to fill out. When this was filled, I was passed on to another wicket, where I signed a lot of papers about whom I wanted notified if I was killed, and other such cheerful subjects, and was then given a card and a slip of paper, and was sent to gate number one, where another official gave me a number, a badge with a number on it, and a brass tag that was to be kept in my pocket while I was in the yard and deposited in a box by the gate when I left.

Then a guard led the way to the angle shop where the blacksmiths and the slabs were situated; and I was initiated into the secrets of bending steel white-hot from the furnace. This was absolutely different from anything I had ever been accustomed to.

Up north, in my clearing, or in the mine I had worked hard, as hard as I could, but there was always time to talk, laugh or sing, or dream delightful dreams while I worked. The cool, clean mountain air was

always there, and the clear, sweet water to drink. But here in the yard! Though it was winter-time it was hot; and the heat from the long roaring furnace, that throbbed and thundered as if about to explode from the violence of the hell within, made the shed stifling. The sweat poured out of me in streams. When the white-hot steel came out of the vicious fire-spitting maw that was the gate to the furnace, the heat from it scorched our faces till they blistered and puffed in great red swellings. Eight of us and a mechanic there were, dragging the glowing beams around, bending them to the forms on the great iron floor that was the slab, and mauling them into shape with our hammers. The faces of the men were streaked with dirt and sweat, ugly with the swellings from the heat and beastly from the constant strain. It seemed to me that they had absolutely no relaxation from the work in hand, and that I had never seen men work so hard before in my life. Had they all been big men like the Mexican that had been hired with me, I would have quit that first day and sought for work somewhere else; but three of the men were much smaller than I, and they were not as strong, for at the very beginning of my work there I picked up one end of a steel beam alone, while it took three of them to carry the other end. This made me ashamed to quit a job that weaker men than I could handle. I learned that we were doing piece-work, and that was the reason for the great rush. The more we did, the more we were paid; and when that evening I made my weary way out of the yard, one of the men with whom I had worked told me that we had each made about eight dollars and a half that day. I telephoned

to Marian that I would not be back till the coming Saturday. Then I found a clean, quiet room which I made my home. I would work in the shipyard till I received word about the book. If it was accepted by the publishers, and I got enough money to justify it, I would quit. If not, I would work on till it was time to go back to our ranch at Viking's Cove.

Thus began an entirely new method of living for me. I got up at five in the morning, took a cold plunge, and sat down to work till seven o'clock. I was writing some experiences in Alaska, trying to make them into a novel, and I found it very fascinating. Then promptly at seven I would make up my lunch from supplies I had bought from the corner grocery, chiefly consisting of bread, cheese, fruit, and nuts. Then I would walk swiftly down to a restaurant on the water-front for my breakfast. When that was done it would be seven-thirty, and I would have time to catch one of the early ferries to Terminal Island before the great rush of men came on the cars from Los Angeles. I would reach the shipyard at twenty minutes to eight, at the time the gates were flung open and the long lines of men filtered slowly in, checked up by the gatekeepers, and melted away among the shops and ways.

Then there was time to gather around the throbbing furnace with the other men, listening to their stories and their controversies about the union. It was an "open shop" yard, and some of the men thought that all the workers ought to organize into one big union; but they were mighty quiet about it when the guards came around, which they always did when a lot of men were grouped together. Invariably the men scat-

tered, with knitted brows and impatient gestures. The guards were thoroughly hated.

We were not allowed to sit down on the job. We were not allowed to gather in groups in the mornings or during dinner-time, except when the band played by the yard restaurant; and I was told that if any man was overheard talking union by one of the guards, he was soon after discharged. All over the shop were warning placards: "Any man found smoking on the job will be DISCHARGED." "Any man quitting his post before the whistle blows will be DISCHARGED." "Any man not at his post when the second whistle blows will be DISCHARGED." Discharged with great red letters, and discharged for any offence we might commit. I thought of Mr. Smith, the stockholder in the mine. This was his idea of good management. How he would have admired the many guards, well-dressed men with hardened faces and bright badges on their coats, walking around with springy cat-like steps, spying on us, and seeing to it that we lived up to the rules. How those guards were hated in return! Some of the men glared with open hatred at those well-dressed watchers with guns bulging under their coat-tails.

At first holding my job was a hard tussle. I had used a hammer before, and had been fairly efficient with it; but it had usually been an eight-pound hammer, and at the very most a sixteen-pounder. Here, however, we used nothing lighter than twelve-pound hammers, and from that up to thirty-two pounders, according to the nature of the work in hand. A very few strokes with the big hammers exhausted me completely at first, but little by little I developed

the muscle necessary to swing them, and by the time a month had passed I was quite handy with the monstrous things. At first the men had seemed like slaving beasts to me; but as I became acquainted with them, they grew more human and kindly in my eyes, till even when the heat from the steel was greatest, and when its white-hot glow and the flames from the furnace, playing on their dirty swollen, strained faces, made them look like demons in purgatory, they looked better to me than the sleek fellows with the badges, with hard faces that never sweated, standing by watching us beat the steel into shape. I became friends with these blacksmiths, and sometimes when the steel was heating and there was nothing else to do, if the guards were not in sight, we talked of ourselves and exchanged confidences. I told of the north, my homestead, and the hunting and fishing, and most of them were enthusiastic about it. They longed for the primitive. The Anglo-Saxons were all sick of the south and over-civilization. They longed for the north with its sharp seasons, its hardships, and its health.

On Saturdays the yard closed down at noon. Then I rushed off to my room, bathed, dressed in my best, and ran to the electric line that took me home to my beloved. Also for three Saturdays I expected to get word about my book, but there was nothing. Had it not been that I worked so hard during the week, earning between six and ten dollars every day I worked, and was so happy to be with my wife again on Saturday, I would have worried considerably. Instead of that, I thought less and less of the manuscript, and would perhaps have given up hope

altogether, had there not come a letter from Frank Wolfe, to whom we had sent the manuscript, on the fourth Saturday.

He had no intention of raising my hopes too high, and it would not be fair for him to tell me what he thought about the book, for the publishers he and Miss Massee had sent the manuscript to might feel very different about it. Still, it was plain from his letter that he was enthusiastic, and he asked me many questions as to how long I had been in America, and how long I had been trying to write. My hopes were rekindled then, and for a week I lived in a haze of dreams of fame and wealth. But I did not quit my job, for success was not yet certain, and the trip down had cost us the larger portion of our savings. I must be sure to have enough money for us to go north on, and to buy a summer's supply besides. So I worked on, and it was well, for the next Saturday there was a letter from Miss Massee waiting for me that cooled me and brought me back to earth again. It was a very kind letter. She herself had liked the book very much, but a straight narrative was the most difficult kind to sell. The publishers must think of that, so I must not expect too much, for there was a chance that the manuscript might be returned to me.

I had flown so high the week before that this was a stunning blow. I did not consider that she had spoken thus from kindness to me, but I thought that because she was a woman she could not understand. I tried to tell myself that my book was written for men, and that the publishers would think differently about the matter. They would like the book, as Frank Wolfe had liked it. But even as I struggled against

dejection I sank deeper, until by the end of the week, when I came home to Marian, I was satisfied that my book had no chance, and was slowly picking up courage to do real work on the one that I was writing in the mornings in San Pedro.

Spring was almost upon us before we heard anything from the publisher. Then one Saturday when I ran up the street from the car line to clasp my lady to my breast and hug my youngster close to me, she held a letter in her hand. It was from Mr. Horace Liveright, the publisher. He had read sixty-eight pages of my manuscript, and so far had liked it very much, but his mere liking the book did not mean that it would be published, for there were many other things to be considered. He asked me not to hope too much, as even if the book were published it might mean little to me financially. A first book was rarely a financial success to the writer or to the publisher. And there were still over a hundred more pages to read!

My hopes did not soar this time. I had had my flight of joyful imagination, and the misery had been too deep when the reaction had set in. The letter cheered me up, however, and in the weeks that followed I steadily grew more confident of the ultimate success of my book. I was making good wages, my weekly pay-cheque ran from thirty-five to forty-five dollars, and there was one stretch of sixteen workdays when I earned nine dollars and sixty cents every day. That was on a contract, making ribs, or side-frames, as they were called, and it wore the gang out completely, ending up with sending half of us down with the "'flu."

The Mexican was the first to go, keeling over while we were dragging a fifty-foot frame out of the furnace. The first-aid men rushed up and took him away, and the rest of us kept right on working. There was no time to stop, and we did not learn till next day that it was the dreaded "'flu" that had got him. Then on Saturday morning, just before quitting-time, Radcliffe, the mechanic, broke down; but I was so excited that I forgot this, for when I came out of the gate Marian was waiting for me. She had come down to San Pedro to spend a few days with me. We went to Los Angeles the next day, and by the time we reached San Pedro that night, both of us were sick and shivering. We had the "'flu."

We sent word to Marian's parents, and then lay there waiting to get well. Those were days of terrible depression for me. No word from New York. My book was an absolute failure! I was certain that I was about to die, and I groaned over the certainty that I would never see young Edmund again. It was terrible; but Marian was with me, and she kept me from sinking too deep, and as she became well much faster than I, she nursed me through the sickness. Still, for two weeks we were at considerable expense, and that cut deep into our savings, and in my depression I believed as well that we would never again reach Viking's Cove.

As I grew better I again began to hope. I took long walks with Marian at my side, to the harbour or the beaches, where we strolled over the sandy stretches or climbed the rocks by Point Firmin, seeking shells and exploring deep crevices made by the sea. My good health and ambition slowly came back to me.

Marian returned to her child, and I to my work on the slab.

But it was not for long. Saturday came and I hurried to my room, bathed, put on clean things and ran down to the car. It was a beautiful day. For almost a week there had been rain, and now everything that had hitherto been dusty and gray shone bright and newly washed. The air was clean and crisp: spring had come to Southern California, and the grassy slopes along the car line were jewelled with golden poppies. As I realized that it would soon be time for us to go back to our home near the fiord by Odin's Lake, the old exuberant joy welled up in me, and I longed to be on the way. All the way from Los Angeles to Marian's town we plunged through orange grove after orange grove, laden with golden fruit and snow-white blossoms. I sat by the open window drinking in the beauty and splendour of it—but it could not compare with my northland. This was a delightful country, beautiful to the eye, but the trees stood lined up in geometrical precision, all alike for miles and miles. It was too splendid to be monotonous, but there was a sameness about it, very different from the woods of Alaska, where there was something new at every turn of the trail.

Marian stood at the corner where I usually got off. She held a letter in her hand, and in her face there shone a solemn, excited joy. It had come! We walked into a little quiet park, and sat down on a bench in a shady nook. She read the letter to me, and the contract that was enclosed. Mr. Liveright had decided to publish my book. He was tremendously interested, and would do all in his power to make it

a complete success. My head swam for the joy of it. I flew high in the air, borne on wings of joyful exultation. It was so magnificent that I wanted to shout for joy. In the free north I could have shouted. Marian had the same thought. Our eyes met.

"Oh, Svend, now we can go north! I want to be in our little cabin by the lake. Then we will realize it fully when we are back in our home, in our dear home again. Do you know, Svend, that the grouse are hooting on the hill behind the lake, and that the wind is warm in the spruce tops?"

THE END

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